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Dear Father

Sincerely



THE CITY OF PEACE.

THE CITY OF PEACE

BY

THOSE WHO HAVE ENTERED IT.

SECOND EDITION.



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PREFACE.



THE following narratives of conversion to the Catholic faith were (with one or two exceptions) originally written with a view to anonymous publication only, in which form they appeared in *Saint Joseph's Sheaf* during the years 1897-1902. In arranging, however, for their re-issue, we felt that such utility as could attach to the papers, and which alone could warrant the re-publication of them, must necessarily depend to a large extent upon the fact of the writers undertaking personal responsibility for statements relating to their personal experience. Accordingly, the several authors generously responded to the appeal made to them, consenting to the proposed arrangement; still we might truthfully apply to others what we have been specially requested to state by the Reverend author

of the article heading the volume—namely, that “he consents to giving his signature only with extreme reluctance, and in deference to urgent and repeated pressure from the Editors.”

One paper still remains unsigned, the reason being that the writer is at such a distance from Ireland that we could not communicate with him without delaying the appearance of the volume. Should a second edition be required, we hope to be allowed to supply the omission.

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MEMOIRS

OF

A BENEDICTINE MONK.



TO write the history of a conversion, even of one's own, is no easy task. For when one tries to trace to its first source and inspiration the work of grace which has gradually, almost imperceptibly, developed in the soul, one finds a long chain of divine favours which stretch back to the first dawning of consciousness, and whose origins are hidden and unknown. But if I try to find a moment when the slow work of my conversion to Catholic truth began, it seems to me that I must trace it to the time when Catholicism was first presented, though in a distorted and mutilated form, to my youthful mind. I remember standing with a schoolfellow before the window of a low newspaper shop, in the Cathedral town where I was at school, eagerly scanning a copy of the *Police News* which contained an *exposé* (with ludicrous pictures) of that notorious Ritualistic work, *The Priest in Absolution*. The "priest," in shovel hat and flowing cassock, was enveigling silly girls and weak-minded young men into the confessional. The confessional!

it was the first time I had heard of it, and I was full of youthful curiosity as to this mysterious engine of priestly wickedness. Imagine my consternation when I was told by my schoolfellow, that the "Doctor" heard confessions, and did his best to get all the boys to go to him. "I shall *never* go!" I declared fervently, and my friend applauded my Protestant and independent spirit. (I was about twelve at the time.) But, alas! for my resolve. Within a few weeks of that day, I was kneeling for the first time in an Anglican confessional. The "Doctor" had spoken a few words, he had explained the benefits of the ordinance, and I was converted.

This will indeed seem a strange beginning for the history of a conversion to the Catholic faith; but I do not know where else to begin. The Anglican confessional first taught me several important Catholic truths, which were till then unknown to me. The first was the nature and the heinousness of sin, and the necessity of pardon through the Precious Blood; the second, that the Precious Blood was applied to the soul through the medium of the Sacraments; the third, that only a duly ordained priest could administer those Sacraments. In a word, I had embraced the truths which are represented by that much-abused word "Sacerdotalism."

It was true that the "Doctor" was a very amateur hand at hearing confessions, and that it was a little hard for a timid lad to have to confess his peccadilloes to the Master who "swished" him for such as he found out in other ways. Nevertheless I have always been, and still am, profoundly grateful to Divine Providence

for taking me to that school. And I attribute to the Anglican confessional many graces besides those already pointed out. There is no doubt that such an institution, imperfect and in some ways possibly harmful, may help to save the young from many grievous sins, and teach them how to make good acts of contrition.

The "Doctor" was very "extreme" for those days, though now he might be considered "moderate," if not almost "Protestant," by some Ritualists. He celebrated the Lord's Supper clad in a white linen chasuble, and taught us to receive the Communion fasting, unless health rendered this unadvisable. I remember still, with emotion, those quiet early "Celebrations," where we boys bowed down in adoration before what we believed to be the Sacramental Presence of our Lord, and where the Bread and Wine were verily to us the channels of mysterious grace. At Evensong on festivals the "Doctor" would appear, no longer "clad in white samite, mystic, wonderful," but in gorgeous cope, whose hood was embroidered with a representation of the Last Supper. Incense however, was unknown; and not a few of the lads, I remember, objected strongly to the cope.

Not so I, however—I seemed to take naturally to everything that was Catholic, and, looking back through these long years, it seems to me that I had a soul "*naturaliter Catholica*," and I thank God for it. The "Doctor" gave us elaborate lessons in theology, and in those we imbibed, with a certain admixture of error, many very important Catholic truths. They took, for the most part, the form of explanations of those terrible productions, the Thirty-nine Articles of

Religion, which an Anglican once feelingly described as the "forty stripes save one." I remember, too, a course on "the Living Voice of the Church" (which resulted in the conclusion that the "living" voice was long dead!)—and another on the Athanasian Creed. As to the doctrine of the Holy Eucharist, we were taught the Lutheran heresy of Consubstantiation (the "Doctor's" favourite illustration being a piece of red-hot iron), which is, however, superior to the Calvinism generally held in the Anglican Communion. We were taught to adore our Blessed Lord present in the Sacrament, but at the same time to believe that the Bread was also there. One of the doctrines which I first learned in this school, was that of the Apostolical succession, and the necessity of valid ordination for the Church's ministers in order to secure valid Sacraments. This great truth was firmly impressed on my mind. I left this school when I was about fourteen, and went to a great public school in London. Here there was little or no religious teaching, but as I lived at home, I did not lose so much by this. I was now a full-blown Ritualist, for the "Doctor's" teaching had found a fruitful soil in my heart. I delighted in ceremonies and processions, put up crucifixes and sacred pictures in my room, and attended a church where the services were of a pronounced Ritualistic type. I regularly went to confession, and when I was about sixteen I undertook to teach a class in the Sunday school attached to the Ritualistic church I have mentioned. Every Sunday I used to rise early and take a long walk of three quarters of an hour, fasting, in order to attend the "early Celebration"

in my favourite church. After this I used to breakfast with the Vicar, who was a good kind old man to whom I owe much. Here one sometimes met various celebrities of the High Church party, such as Canon Carter of Clewer, or "Father" Benson of Cowley, and this was a great delight to me. After breakfast I went to my Sunday-school and tried to instil a little religion into a class of noisy, unruly boys. Then came their service in a chapel attached to the school, and there one had enough to do to keep them quiet. After this came the treat of the day, the "High Celebration" in the church. The service would not now be considered "advanced," but in those days it was the nearest approach to a High Mass which I had ever seen, and it was a source of endless delight to me. After the service there was a hurried walk home to dinner, which, having been hastily swallowed, was followed by another walk to Sunday-school for the afternoon instruction, and the catechising which followed in church. After tea, came the evening service, which was always bright and hearty, and then I walked home once more. It was a tiring day, but to me a very happy one.

I was about sixteen, I think, when an event occurred which I have always considered as my first conversion, a conversion to personal religion and to an interior life. I went into a High Church shop one day, and bought a translation (or rather Anglican adaptation) of St. Francis of Sales' *Introduction to a Devout Life*. I well remember how, having bought it, I went into a neighbouring church and began to read it. It was a revelation to me, and it changed my whole life. For the

first time I learned something of the personal love of God for my soul, and of the science of prayer. St. Francis taught me how to meditate. Up to then my religion had been more demonstrative than deep-rooted, more ceremonial than interior. But now I began to understand something of the spiritual life, and to feel something of the desire to consecrate myself to God. About this time I joined a confraternity attached to my church, and this gave a new impetus and a new direction to my devotion. One of the rules was to say Sext daily, or, at least, some mid-day prayers, and I bought a small book (brought out I believe, by Cardinal Newman) which contained the little hours of the Breviary, and began regularly reciting them. I was only a public schoolboy, but I think I began from this time to long for the religious life. I had always wanted to be a clergyman, and now I began to understand what the life of consecration meant. I do not in the least mean that I was a good lad; but, at any rate, I had high ideals, though I often fell grievously short of them.

I left school and went up to Oxford, at the age of nineteen, to a High Church college, to which I had been recommended by my spiritual guides. Here I soon got into a Ritualistic set, and made many friends of my own views. We had a society which used to meet weekly in the rooms of its various members, and in which a paper would be read by the host on some ecclesiastical subject. I got into contact with the Cowley Fathers, and with their remarkable founder and superior, "Father" Benson. Here I fancied I found a revival of the ancient monastic

orders which I admired so passionately, and my heart was soon set on joining this body of excellent men, whose ascetic life made a great impression on my youthful mind. And thus came another great grace of my life, the greatest after that of my conversion to the faith—the dawning of a vocation to the religious life. I became an Associate of Cowley, and used to wear a cord round my waist—under my clothes, of course—and practise various austerities in preparation for the life to which I aspired.

At Oxford I was, of course, a fervent attendant at the well-known Ritualistic church of St. Barnabas, where the services were remarkably popular and attractive, and the genial, stalwart vicar had a great power with young men.

Moreover, I fell greatly under the influence of Dr. King, then Professor of Pastoral Theology, and now Bishop of Lincoln. His simple lectures on Friday evenings on subjects such as the Lord's Prayer, or the Resurrection of our Lord, were attended by crowds of undergraduates, and his power in the University was unequalled. It has been truly said that, "with him sympathy is a form of genius," and, certainly, I never met anyone so attractive. He gave the first retreat to which I ever went, and most beautiful it was, founded in the main, I remember, on St. Bernard's famous treatise, *De Consideratione*.

It was during my first year at Oxford that the Pusey Memorial House was founded. It was nominally a library, as Dr. Pusey's library was preserved there and the three chaplains were called librarians. But as one of them once remarked to me: "The Low-

Church papers are attacking this place as being an endowment of the Confessional in Oxford, and that's just precisely what it is." The librarians laid themselves out to be of service to undergraduates, they gave courses of lectures and sermons on theological and spiritual subjects, and were always at hand to give advice and help to young men. I soon became an *habitué* at Pusey House, and many were the happy hours I spent there. Two great things I gained there, the habit of attending Mass* daily, and the recital of the Canonical Hours. These were recited daily in the chapel, at least the Day Hours, after an expurgated edition of the Sarum Breviary (translated, of course, into English), which had been sanctioned by the Bishop of Oxford. At the same time I must say I had a hearty dislike for the mere Ritualist, of whom there were not a few specimens among my acquaintance, men who delighted in ceremonial, but eschewed fasting, who had private oratories in their rooms in which they celebrated astonishing functions, and at the same time never went to confession, and communicated after breakfast, if at all. Some of these men brought great scandal on the High Church party by their immoral lives, though these, happily, were not very many. Still there were many eccentricities and follies in my own conduct, and I often made my religious views a burden to my friends and relations.

And now I come to an event which I have ever regarded as a turning point of my life.

It was in 1885, after I had been two years at Oxford,

* I use this word, though, of course, improperly, because it expresses what I then believed and was taught.

that my health broke down, and the doctors ordered me a sea-voyage. I sailed in a steamer bound for the Mediterranean and eventually for Constantinople, where I was to stay with friends. But in the Bay of Biscay our ship ran on the rocks off the coast of Spain, some twenty miles from Corunna. It was a terrible experience, for we were no less than seventeen hours clinging to a portion of the wreck (which, happily, had become firmly wedged among the rocks), and expecting every moment to be our last. Wearily the hours of the night dragged on (it was about seven o'clock in the evening when we struck), and when morning dawned it brought us no relief. During the night several of the passengers were drowned beneath our eyes, and, as the tide rose, we were constantly washed by the great waves that broke over the wreck. To make our plight worse, we could clearly see on the top of the cruel and beetling cliffs which rose before us about half a mile from the wrecked ship, the forms of men and women gazing calmly at us. As a matter of fact, these poor Spanish fisher people had done what they could to help us, by sending to the nearest fishing village, some nine miles off, for boats (our own were all broken up); but this we did not know at the time.

During those long hours I was, for the most part, perfectly calm and even happy. I prayed most of the time, and I remember reciting aloud for the comfort of my fellow-passengers some of the beautiful prayers and antiphons from the Itinerary in the Breviary: "Into the way of peace and prosperity may the Almighty and Merciful Lord direct our steps, and may

the Archangel Raphael be with us in the way, that with peace, safety, and joy we may return home." We sang hymns, too, and though very cowardly by nature, I did not feel fear. I was comforted by thinking that just before sailing I had been to Confession and Communion. Had I died that night, as many of my fellow-passengers did, I should have died without a doubt as to my position, although I might have had fears about my sins. I mention this because it may be a comfort to others who have had to see their friends die still Protestants. There can be no reason to doubt the good faith even of those whose position seems to us the most illogical. Of course, I am speaking generally. Still, as I am on the subject, I feel bound to add my testimony to that of Cardinal Manning and many others that, as far as my knowledge goes, I believe the great majority of Anglicans to be in the most absolute good faith—or the most "inconceivable ignorance" if you will.

At last we heard a cry : " Boats ! Boats are coming round the headland ! " The desire to live came back with a rush, and I fell on my knees praying, " Lord, let them come in time ! Let them come in time ! " Ah ! if we could always pray with as much fervour !

To make a long story short, we were rescued by the good Spanish fishermen, and at last brought safely to shore. Here I remember taking off my hat in fervent gratitude before the great crucifix that stood at the entrance to the village. And the first enquiry I made was as to the whereabouts of the church, that I might go to pour out my heart in thanksgiving to God my Saviour.

I have always looked upon this shipwreck as one of the greatest graces of my life. In the first place, it taught me that death is not to be feared if God be with us. In the second place, it filled me with a consuming desire to consecrate to God the life which He had thus wonderfully given back to me.

And here I may remark that the first day of this new life was the feast of an English saint whom I long had loved above all.* And this feast was, in the merciful Providence of God, destined to be the day on which, five years later, I was to be rescued by Catholic hands from the shipwreck of heresy and admitted into the bark of Peter. This saint, too, by a third coincidence, was to be the patron of my future life; his name was to be given to me by my superiors when I took, at last, the holy habit of religion, which became my chief desire from this day of rescue.

I had to resume my journey to Constantinople, and after a stay of some months there, and a shorter one in Naples, I started once again for the north. I had not much time or money left, and I could not make up my mind whether it were better to stay a week in Rome and a week in Florence, or all the time in Florence, leaving Rome for another visit. I thought that I could not possibly do justice to Rome in a week or a fortnight. So I left the matter to "chance." In the omnibus which was taking me to the station I asked the advice of a fellow-passenger—a lady. She strongly advised me to go to Rome. "At least you can see St. Peter's, and the Vatican, and

* I had read St. Bede's "Ecclesiastical History" for the Honour School of Theology at Oxford.

the Capitoline Museum," she said—so I decided, or rather God decided for me; I arrived in Rome and went to my hotel. I remember kneeling down in my bedroom altogether overpowered by the thought that I was at last IN ROME, and thanking God with all my heart. But I felt so bewildered by the greatness of Rome and the memories that assailed me at every step that I did not know where to go at first. So here again I trusted to "chance" and asked a stranger. He naturally replied "St. Peter's!" I jumped into a cab and was driven to the Basilica. . . .

The *Limen Apostolorum*! Heretic as I was, it was with beating heart that I pushed aside the great leather curtain and passed into that vast temple which enshrines the tomb of the Fisherman. It is a solemn moment in the life of any man when he enters that Basilica for the first time, but to me it was a veritable crisis in my history.

Surely it was by no mere coincidence that, as I entered, I caught the sound of distant chanting from the chapel of the choir. What was it that these Canons were singing? It was the First Vespers of the Feast of St. Gregory the Great, the Apostle of the English. Surely my guardian angel led me there on that day and at that hour! And I venture to believe that the great Pope who loved our land so well looked down from Heaven with compassion upon the young stranger "from the Isle of the Angles," and won for him then the grace that he had won of old for his pagan countrymen.

Once the Apostle of this English land,
Now thou rejoicest 'mid the angelic band.
As then thou helpd'st this nation to believe,
Pray that again it may God's truth receive.*

* Adapted from the Breviary hymn by St. Peter Damian.

After kneeling at the tomb of the Apostles, I went to the chapel of the choir. There, standing by the grille, I noticed a Dominican Father whose figure and face attracted me. Moved by some unaccountable impulse (at least I could not then account for it), I went up to him, and asked him, in my halting French, at what hour the High Mass would be sung next day at the altar of St. Gregory, as I would like to assist at it. To my astonishment he answered me in English. He did not know, but he would enquire in the sacristy for me. We fell into conversation. He asked if I was a stranger and alone, and then, moved by the same mysterious influence, offered to be my guide during my stay. Needless to say, the offer was thankfully accepted. Indeed it was an angel of the Lord I had found to guide me.

Next day we knelt together before the altar of the great Pope, whom our ancestors loved to call "Gregory our Father who brought us baptism." I little knew it at the time, but on that day, and at that altar, the grace of my conversion was granted. For God inspired that good Religious with so great an interest in the young Protestant kneeling beside him, that he made a vow to pray every day at Holy Mass that I might become a Catholic and a Religious, and never to cease until his prayer was granted. But of this vow he told me nothing at the time. Nor did he trouble me with one word of controversy. He saw that the hour when controversy might be useful to me had not yet dawned, and with rare self-restraint he abstained from saying a word against what I then held so dear. He con-

lented himself with showing me the wonders of Catholic Rome, the relics of the saints, the rooms where they lived, and the churches they haunted, and thus with helping me in every way to realise the glories of the true Catholic Church, the Mother of Saints, the spotless Bride of Christ. His prayers, I have always believed, were the chief instruments of my conversion. For more than four years he prayed, hoping against hope, and without ever seeing my face again.

Another thing he was permitted by the Divine Providence to do for me, and that was to point out, though all unconsciously, the religious house where I was to receive the monastic habit. He took me one day, I remember, to hear the German College sing a plain song Mass. I was deeply impressed both by the chant and by the ceremonies. "Well," he told me, "there is one place in the world where they sing the chant much better even than here. It is the Benedictine Abbey of Maredsous.* There they sing like angels." I was at once fired with the desire of visiting this abbey, and he gave me an introduction to one of the Fathers there. I never dreamed at the time that in little more than four years I should be clothed, in that very abbey, with the holy habit of St. Benedict, and that five years after that on the same feast of St. Gregory, I should stand at the same altar-tomb of England's Apostle in Rome, to offer up for the first time the adorable sacrifice of the Mass. But God knew all this, and who can doubt that it was God who led me to St. Peter's on that 11th of March, 1886, and brought me to the man whom

* In Belgium.

He had destined to be the instrument of His mighty work of grace?

The delightful visit to Rome came only too soon to an end. I parted with my Dominican friend with mutual regret. We have never met from that day to this, but I look forward to meeting him again as one of the joys of Paradise. He gave me as a keepsake a relic of the bones of St. Thomas Aquinas, which I ever cherished as my most precious possession. I brought home with me from the Eternal City impressions that were never effaced. I had not been scandalized at anything I saw there; on the contrary, I had been profoundly edified. And, strange as it may seem, considering my religious position, I had gained at Rome two great graces, the first a devotion to the saints, the second a real veneration for the person of the Vicar of Christ. It was from this date that I began habitually to invoke the saints, which up till then I had done, if at all, in a very timid and indirect manner. From this time, too, I felt an instinctive love for the Pope, I could not bear to hear his office spoken lightly of, or his claims derided or contemned. It is true that I had at present no doubts as to my own position, still I felt strongly that I envied that of born Catholics. I thought it would be wrong to abandon the Church of England, but I no longer loved her as of old. I had lost my heart to One whom I was taught to regard as her great Sister and powerful but ungenerous rival. Two obstacles stopped my progress towards the Church. The first was prejudice. I had lost much of this, it is true, but still there remained a strong bias against

English Catholics, whom, even while I envied them, I considered schismatics. I was convinced that the Anglican Establishment was the true representative of the ancient Church of St. Thomas and St. Anselm, though in a sadly fallen and degraded state. I was told that converts invariably deteriorated in piety and morality, and that the historic claims of the Papacy were bolstered up on forgeries. The infallibility of the Pope was represented as a modern doctrine invented by the ambition of Pius IX. and imposed on a reluctant church, in the teeth of history.

The second obstacle was the outcome of the first. I belonged to one or two Anglican confraternities, and the most important and most essential of their rules forbade their members to attend any religious services except those of the Church of England. Conscience was thus enlisted in the service of error, and I dared not attend a Catholic Service, lest I should commit a deadly sin of schism. My confessors, seeing my tendencies, no doubt, better than I did myself, were naturally specially severe on this point. The result was, that until I was received into the Church, I had never assisted at Mass or any kind of service in a Catholic church in England. Abroad, of course, it was quite different. There it was praiseworthy, if not obligatory, to assist at Catholic worship ! The Catholic reader will smile incredulously at such inconsistency ; but, as a matter of fact, this is the teaching and the practice of the vast majority of the High Church party. "Schism comes on," as has been wittily said, "half-way across the Channel, like sea-sickness !"*

* As I am writing this, I find in the current number of the *Church*

However, since my visit to Rome, I used to pay surreptitious visits to the Blessed Sacrament, and often I would light a votive taper before an image of our Blessed Lady, the heavenly Mother whom I had at last learned to love.

After taking my degree at Oxford, I went to a theological college situated not far from a university town. Here I was in an atmosphere such as I loved. The Gothic pile and its beautiful frescoed chapel had the appearance of a monastery; the men were sympathetic and brotherly; the life, with its fixed hours for prayer and meditation, was most congenial. I never spent happier days than at Elsdon (as we will call it), never, at least, till I became a Catholic. From the natural point of view nothing could be more delightful to me than life at Elsdon. The Principal, Vice-principal, and Chaplain were utterly unlike the typical Oxford Don, and a happier family party than we made could hardly be found anywhere. Near at hand was the Bishop's palace, in the gardens of which we had liberty to roam, and hard by the beautiful old parish church, where we used to attend daily, morning and evening prayer, besides the offices in the college chapel. These consisted of Prime, Sext and Compline, as I think, with a celebration of the Holy Communion twice a week. In this, as in many respects, Elsdon did not come up to my

Review, the most extreme Ritualistic organ, the following paragraph:—
"It is the duty of loyal Churchmen, in places where the local Church is in communion with the Roman See, to attend its services, not 'occasionally,' but exclusively. On the other hand, it is mortal sin to attend a 'Romanist' church in this country, where the true English [i.e., the Anglican] bishops alone have jurisdiction." Prodigious!

standard of "Catholicism." The ceremonial was exceedingly moderate, and the services strictly Anglican ; but it was understood that this moderation resulted not so much from the views of the superior of the college as from our proximity to the episcopal residence, and our consequent liability to Protestant interference. Among Ritualists, bishops are looked on as a necessary evil, and, as one of their journals once naively remarked, it was considered "a pity that they could not be shut up, and only let out for the necessary functions of ordination and confirmation."

Here at Elsdon serious doubts began to assail me for the first time. The principal gave us elaborate explanations (or rather explainings away) of the "Thirty-nine Articles." But these explanations were, in some cases, so evidently futile that doubts as to the whole Anglican position forced itself upon one. When we were told, for instance, that the article which declared that "general councils had erred, and could err," made no such assertion as to councils "œcumenical," one could only shrug one's shoulders at the evident insincerity of the evasion. There were other articles even harder to swallow, as, for instance, those that declared that the Church of Rome had "erred in matters of faith" (for, if so, how could she still, as we were taught, be a branch of the Catholic Church ?) ; that "good works done before justification had the nature of sin ;" that the wicked did not receive the Body of Christ in the Sacrament ; that the Romish doctrine of Purgatory, etc., was "a fond thing vainly invented ;" and that Confirmation, Penance, Extreme

Unction, Orders and Matrimony were "not Sacraments of the Gospel, but either a corrupt following of the Apostles or states of life allowed in Holy Scripture" (!) How could such statements be reconciled with the Catholic faith? The Principal did his best, poor man; but sometimes his attempts at evasion were truly pitiful.

Our instruction included lectures on Church history from the Vice-principal, who was an exceedingly brilliant Oxford man, a very devout Christian, and a most delightful companion, but whose views on Church history were somewhat incoherent. All this, as well as the deep-rooted Protestantism of many of my companions, who never acquired more than a veneer of High Churchism, could not but make me think, for I proposed within a year to become a minister of this very heterogeneous and heterodox body called the Church of England.

I made there three friends who had a great influence on my future. The first of these was a young man, of keenly logical mind, and extraordinary powers of reading. I will call him Johnson. The second was also a clever man, with a winning manner, and a dogmatic way of laying down the law, very impressive to the young; his name was Herbert. The third was not so brilliant, but more spiritual. He was, in fact, the most devout and most earnest of all the men, and this was the more remarkable, as he had not long been converted from religious indifferentism. He had an instinctive dislike to Anglicanism and to everything Protestant, and an extraordinary yearning after Catholic devotion and

sanctity. His favourite study was the life and works of St. Alphonsus, no fit study truly for an aspirant after Anglican Orders. I will call him Leslie. We four had many a talk over our religious and ecclesiastical position, many an hour did we spend over the study of Newman and other Catholic writers, and three of us daily grew more dissatisfied with our lot. Not so, however, Herbert. He had made up his mind that he was right and that Rome was wrong. He informed me one day that there were only two positions logically possible. Either Rome's claims were true and all were bound to submit to them, or they were false, and were therefore anti-Christian. In a word, Rome was either the one Church of Christ, or she was anti-Christ. I rebelled against being thrust into this dilemma, but I was none the less impaled upon its horns. Herbert had chosen the later alternative, but this I could never do. I had seen too much to believe that Rome was not governed by the Spirit of Christ. I must read the whole question up for myself, I decided. Alas! the more I read, the more bewildered I got, specially as I thought it my duty to begin with the Anglican writers. At last I resolved I would throw up controversy and betake myself to prayer. Leslie, who was deeply interested in my struggles, encouraged me in this. His own Ordination was drawing near. In the Retreat before it, he passed through a terrible time of desolation and anguish, but he threw himself on the mercy of God, and went on with his purpose, trusting that if he were in the wrong, God would, in His own time,

make this clear to him. He was ordained deacon, and left the College for the parish where he was to act as curate. This was in June, and in December I was myself to be ordained.

Johnson meanwhile had been engaged on a line of study of his own. The doubts engendered by the study of the Articles on Grace and Justification, and especially that which condemned the good works of pagans and unbelievers, had thrown him into a close study of the great Catholic theologians. He spent weeks in studying the doctrine of Suarez, and reluctantly came to the conclusion that the Articles were blasphemous and heretical. As he had no scruple about publishing this decision, and as I had the greatest respect for his intellectual powers, this naturally upset me not a little, especially as the Superiors of the College were able to make but the lamest defence of the incriminated Articles. I remember Johnson's remark on another of these miserable articles. "‘Works of Supererogation,’ the article declares, ‘cannot be taught without arrogance and impiety.’ Now, as I firmly believe in them, I shall be bound to teach them—I shall, therefore, be guilty, according to the Church of England, of arrogance and impiety. I am very sorry, but the only way in which I can conscientiously assent to the Article is to admit that I am arrogant and impious!"

Now, as we all had solemnly to assent to these Articles before we were ordained, this was no mere academic question, but one which had seriously to be met. But Johnson was fond of paradox, and did not always speak seriously.

However this may be, in spite of our doubts and fears, both Johnson and I were ordained deacons. I don't know how he managed to swallow the Articles, for my part I took refuge in authority. Dr. Pusey and many others more learned and better than myself, men whom I revered and trusted, had assented to these Articles, so I could do the same. May God forgive me, for I did it in ignorance.

Not long ago I came across the letter which, by the Bishop's request, I, like the other candidates, wrote him on this occasion, and which he afterwards returned to me. I may quote part of it, as it throws light on my motives for seeking Ordination :—

“My dear Lord Bishop [I wrote], it is difficult for me exactly to put into words my motive for seeking Holy Orders ; but I believe that the chief motive is the desire to do something for the love of Jesus, who has done so much for me. I think it is more the love of Jesus than the love of souls, though I pray that I may gain that more and more deeply in my ministry. But, my Lord, I have always been brought up with the idea of entering Holy Orders, and I think I have never had any other wish ; so that the motive has been a progressive one—first I suppose, because my father was a clergyman, and so it seemed to me the highest and noblest of all callings; then gradually, as I learned to know what sin is, and, in some degree, what penitence is, and what the tender, individual love of Jesus for my soul, weak, and wandering, and sinful as it is—then it seemed as if there could be no other life for one who was a penitent than a life given up to the service

of Jesus, and I began to look forward with trembling hope to my Ordination. . . .

"My Lord, I tremble when I think of what will be laid on me; but I believe that the love of Christ will constrain me, and the prayers of the whole Church will help me, and that, after all, I am to be but the minister of the great High Priest, on whom is laid the chief burden of work."

The Ordination was quiet and peaceful, in the gray old Benedictine Cathedral. I remember praying very earnestly to the Blessed John Fisher, the holy Bishop of Rochester, who had laid down his life in defence of the Catholic faith, and of whom those grey, bare walls still spoke so eloquently. The English martyrs had no small share in my conversion to Catholicity. I felt: "I should have been on their side then, I trust, and why not now?" But at my Ordination I put all thoughts of controversy aside, and only asked that I might do God's will, and be true to the light He gave me. The Bishop was a very pious man, and I tried my best to believe that he was the true successor of the martyred Cardinal; but it was not easy. Still I do not remember having had any doubts as to the validity of the Orders I had received.

So here I was, a parson, thrown into a great South London parish, to see if it were true, as I was told, that hard work was the best remedy for "Roman fever," and that my doubts would soon disappear in the midst of the realities of life.

The church I had chosen was, of course, a very Ritualistic one. It was in the midst of a poor parish,

on which it had very little effect, the congregation that filled it on Sundays coming mostly from a distance, attracted by the ornate character of the services.

There was, of course, a certain amount of work done among the poor, and there was a branch house of an Anglican Sisterhood established in the parish, which did much good among the women and girls of the parish. My vicar was a married man, very attractive in many ways, and sincerely good, but somewhat peculiar. It was impossible to say exactly what he believed, but he delighted in ornate ritual, and our services were most elaborate. It was of our church, I believe, that a Catholic priest who witnessed one of our functions "according to the Use of Sarum," said, "Yes, it was all very grand, no doubt, but I think I prefer our simple old-fashioned Roman rite!" Catholics, sometimes, made mistakes and took our church for one of their own, which was always an occasion of triumph. But though our vicar liked gorgeous ceremonial, he disliked what he called "modern Roman developments." He preached against Transubstantiation. It was even whispered that he was not "sound" on Eternal Punishment. He was in fact, as he delighted to proclaim, "a common-sense Englishman, who couldn't stand Romans or Romanizers!" My two fellow curates were of a very different type. They were as "extreme" as I was, and their great idea was to get the people to Confession, and teach them to believe in "Mary and the Mass." But they also differed from each other in various important matters. The principal point

of difference was on the attitude to assume towards "our Roman brethren." The vicar delighted to talk contemptuously of the "Italian Mission," and declared his belief that Catholics were all schismatics if not heretics. The senior curate was horrified at this, as he held the extreme "geographical" position, as it has been called. He loved everything Roman, and his greatest delight was to spend his holidays abroad, attending all kinds of services in the Catholic churches. Once across the Channel he flung aside his Book of Common Prayer, recited the Roman Breviary instead, and studiously avoided the Anglican chapels. Back in England he sorrowfully bade farewell to the enchantments of Rome, and abstained even from entering the Catholic churches. To do so would, he thought, be an act of schism as heinous as to attend his own service on the Continent! He was, in spite of his vagaries, a splendid fellow, hardworking and devout, and a great power with boys and young men.

My other colleague was even more Roman, or, perhaps, had less scruples. He was learned in liturgy, and was responsible for the "correctness" of our services, which were modelled on the Pre-Reformation English Uses. He hated parish work, and said his vocation was to be a Mass-priest. As he received no salary, he was allowed to do much as he liked, and he spent a great part of his time at a Sisterhood, which was supposed to follow the Benedictine Rule. It had actually an abbess with a pastoral staff! For the edification of these good ladies, my colleague used to say Mass in Latin after the Roman rite. As

to the "Roman Question" he thought it was unnecessary for people to become Catholics who had all they wanted as Anglicans, but he felt no horror at the idea. Indeed, he thought that if one wanted to become a Religious, there was a good deal to say for joining "the real thing," as he always called the Church.

It will be seen that I had fallen among company hardly calculated to remove any doubts as to the Anglican position. Another event soon occurred which came on me, at the time, as a terrible blow. Leslie, my old Elsdon friend, had been writing mysterious letters for some time; he was unhappy in his curacy, there was evidently something wrong. There was no one in the world whom I revered and loved so much, and my consternation can be imagined when at last I heard (it was the Lent after my ordination) that he had, after many struggles, finally decided to seek admission into the Catholic Church.

I shall never forget the agony of mind I went through at this time. It seemed as if all I held dear were slipping away from me. Leslie was the best friend I had, the noblest fellow I had ever known. I loved him more than a brother—and now this terrible separation was coming. Henceforth there would be a gulf between us, for on all that we held most dear and most sacred we could no longer agree, no longer "hold sweet counsel together, or walk in the house of God as friends." Added to this was the new awakening of doubt that was the most poignant pain. I was now an ordained minister of the Church that I had been brought up to believe

was my mother, to leave which I was told by all around me, by my confessor, my superiors, my friends, was mortal sin, perhaps the unpardonable sin of blasphemy against the Holy Ghost! Yet here was one whom I knew to be conscientious, transparently sincere, devout and even saintly, and he was doing this terrible thing. Was it possible I was wrong after all?

Leslie was received at the London Oratory in Holy Week, and I went to see him there. He was full of joy, and could hardly understand my sorrow. But to me it was a separation worse than death. I had other trials to face, for new difficulties arose in the way of my religious vocation. I had wished to enter a Brotherhood and had in fact been accepted as a postulant. But owing to the abnormal position of such Communities in the Church of England, I could not be ordained as a Brother, and I had therefore first to accept a title and work for two years in a parish. I had gone to London with the avowed intention of leaving after my two years were completed. But now graver difficulties arose. The Superior of the Brotherhood had strong anti-Roman views, and particularly objected to the Catholic practice of the invocation of saints. He told me he would not accept me as a novice unless I gave up this practice. Now, I was most anxious to join this Community. It was the only one established in the Church of England that had had any measure of success, and I felt that it was my sole chance of the Religious life for which I so greatly longed. But how could I relinquish a practice which had been

such a help to my spiritual life? How could I bear to give up saying the "Hail Mary" for instance? I told the Superior that I felt my prayers to the saints had been wonderfully answered. He replied that God often "answers a sinner according to the multitude of his idols!" I felt it was impossible to join the Community under such conditions. But it was relinquishing the dream of my life.

I went abroad this summer, and found my way at last to the abbey of Maredsous to which my friend the Dominican had directed me. The two days I spent there were a joy and a revelation. An old monk showed me the monastery, and I remember that when we stood in the choir of the great church, he pointed to the stalls and said smiling, "You see, there is still room for you." My heart sank as I felt how greatly I longed for such a life, and how hopeless the prospect seemed. I wrote to Leslie to tell him of my visit, and received this answer: . . . "I cannot tell you how constantly you are in my thoughts, and how I pray that God may spare you many years of mental anguish. After all it seems to me that we cannot do more than simply yield to grace. Since I left you all, I have thought over and over again about that old difficulty which we both felt together,—*i.e.*, to look upon all thoughts of entering the Church as coming to us in the form of a temptation. I think that very often, as a matter of fact, it is true, and that it reveals to us something wanting in purity of intention; just as, when studying for Holy Orders, we are all tempted to think of the delights (apart from purely spiritual ones)

of a priest's life. When we allow ourselves simply to dwell on the *external beauties*, and to seek in them the motive which is to bring us into the Church, then surely we can be certain our intention is not pure. Do you not think it is a help to look away from these externals, and look upon the Church as a fact *which exists*, and which has to be accounted for, looking upon it either from a *materialistic* point of view, or else seeing in it the actual operation of the Holy Ghost. That is rather the line of thought I took. . . .

"Oh, do not think that to become a Catholic is to choose the easier path. It is, indeed, far harder than to remain. It is only easier in that it is the true way of the Cross, and therefore carries with it consolations which more than compensate for the trials. I think that it has altered me very much, and for the first time in my life I have begun to look longingly to the end, when God will allow me to finish my course on earth. . . .

"You must not think I am writing to you like this, because I am in low spirits. Frankly, it is true, I never felt so utterly lonely as regards earthly things, but never did I feel less lonely or abandoned in spiritual things."

Letters such as this, from one whom I loved so much, could not but have their effect. I longed for the unity and the peace of the Catholic Church, so different from the chaotic confusion of everything around me.

The Lincoln case, which came on about this time, showed me how essentially Protestant was the whole

High Church position. The Ritualists had defied the law, as a usurpation of the State, they had defied their Bishops, because they sought to enforce the law, they now defied the Archbishop's court as a legacy of papal usurpation. What authority would they submit to? They *said* that of a provincial synod, but one found it hard to believe that they were sincere, especially as one knew the judgment that such a synod would give would be against them. This flagrant disobedience to all authority, joined to the impossibility of finding any, even plausible, theory of schism except the Catholic one, filled me with ever increasing doubt. If Roman Catholics were in schism in England, why were they not so abroad, since it was an axiom that the fautors of schisms are themselves schismatics, but if so, the Pope himself was a schismatic, since he was in communion with, and encouraged these "schismatics" in England,—truly a *reductio ab absurdum*.

In my perplexity I wrote to the Benedictine who had so kindly welcomed me at Maredsous abbey. He wrote back most kindly and helpfully. He was a man of vast learning, but as modest as a little child. May he rest in peace!* He told me that I did not so much want instruction and discussion on theological matters as prayer. "I have recommended your precious soul to the prayers of our whole Community, and I remember you in my own prayers, and in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, that the Lord who has begun the work of illumination, may continue and

* Dom Swithbert Bæumer, Sub-prior of Maredsous. He died August 12, 1894. R.I.P.

bring it to a good end. It is He who attracts you, it is His grace that enlightens you and stirs your heart. Pray do not harden it, but follow the Spirit who has already begun to move you." He then proceeded to explain some of my difficulties, and ended thus:—"Once more, however, it is grace you want, and you will receive it by prayer and humility. I suppose you will soon be in a difficult position, for you cannot go on speaking and acting against your convictions; if your heart is Catholic, let the whole man be so. Now, if you cannot go on further in your present position, or cannot take the decisive step in London, then come over to us. You are quite welcome in our house."

But alas! there yet remained for me nearly a year of struggle and of anguish. No doubt God withheld the light of faith on account of my sins. I read books of controversy until I was weary, and seeming to get no clearer, again resolved to throw the whole thing aside. I was strengthened in this by the advice of those about me, and especially by that of two friends; the one, a fellow-student at Elsdon, the other an Anglican Sister of Mercy. They were both *âmes d'élite*, and of the most transparent sincerity and true piety. I can truly say that I have hardly ever known, even in the Catholic Church, souls that seemed to be nearer to God. And yet they never had a shadow of doubt as to their position, and they died as they had lived, in the tranquil love of God, consoled by the rites of the Anglican communion. This was a great difficulty to me (it is not so now), and the influence of these two holy souls, and of others whom I greatly

and deservedly revered in the Church of England, had much to do with my long delay. I could not understand how God could allow such souls to remain outside His Church, when their one desire was to do His Will. I knew nothing then of the consoling doctrine as to those who belong to "the soul of the Church."

Still the want of heroic sanctity among us since the Reformation was an even greater difficulty. Why were there no Anglican *saints*? Thus I was tossed about with doubt, at one time almost convinced, at another tranquilised for the time, but on the whole very wretched and very desolate. I used to go about the parish with a great load at my heart that was positive physical pain.

I was sent to lay my doubts before a clergyman, who was looked up to as a sort of Pope by the extreme High Church party. He combined all Roman doctrine with the most inveterate anti-Roman prejudice. He was supposed to be a great canonist, and to have finally demolished Papal pretensions. Above all, he was most dogmatic and "cocksure." He gave me a lecture on the sin of schism, and told me to recite the Rosary. I was not to let the "moderate" churchmen drive me out of the true Church of my fathers. They were fond of saying: "If you do this, if you believe that, you have no right here, your place is with the Roman Catholics." That was nonsense. It was a mere question of jurisdiction. In doctrine we were at one with Rome. I could believe all Catholic doctrine except the Infallibility of the Pope, which was a modern invention. As I was in Holy Orders, I was

bound to recite the Breviary. Did I do so? If not, if I neglected the chief duties of my state of life, how could I expect to avoid these temptations of the devil? "What," I asked, "was I bound to recite the whole Roman Breviary besides the Morning and Evening Services of the Book of Common Prayer?" "Certainly --and for this reason: All those in Sacred Orders were bound by the law of the whole Catholic Church, East and West, to recite the Seven Canonical Hours daily. We were in Sacred Orders--therefore we were thus bound. It is true we were not bound to use the Roman reformed Breviary of St. Pius V., but it was the most accessible and most convenient form. Besides the Holy Father had lately sanctioned the use of votive offices for the different Ferias, and thus considerably lightened the burden of recitation."

I know all this must seem incredible to Catholics, but I can assure them that I am not exaggerating. In one breath I was told that the Papal claims to universal jurisdiction were to be resisted as a usurpation, and in the next that I was to avail myself of Papal dispensations. In short, inconsistency could not further go, and yet this good man considered himself and was considered by his admirers as a miracle of logical consistency.

This same clergyman admitted me into a kind of secret society of clergymen of which he was Superior. Only the "elect," the *crème de la crème* of Ritualism, were admitted to it. The "brethren" met in "Synod" or "Chapter," vested in cassock and biretta (which latter they always were careful to raise at the holy name of Mary) and discussed the affairs of the

Universal Church in the most grave and responsible manner ! I remember, for instance, that before Lent it was discussed what should be done as to Lenten dispensations, since the Anglican Bishops most unaccountably neglected to issue "Lenten Indults." I think it was decided (I know it was proposed), that if any Bishops did not choose to do their duty in this respect, priests should follow the permission of moral theologians to adopt dispensations allowed in the indult issued by the Bishop of the nearest diocese—who, in this case, would probably be his lordship of Arras and Boulogne !*

I am afraid my readers will think I must have become a lunatic, but, as a matter of fact, one never took all this very seriously. It always struck me that the "Brethren" were vying with each other as to who should be the most "extreme" and say the most extravagant things. Yet it is certain that this Society was widely spread and had great influence in the Ritualistic body. It must be remembered, too, that we were starting on the false premise that we were Catholic priests, and that we had all the duties, responsibilities, and privileges of priests. It was certainly a significant fact to me that when I was admitted I received a manual which had belonged to a member who had lately resigned, on account of his reception into the Catholic Church, and that at the same Chapter the resignation of another Brother for the same reason was solemnly announced.

* Certain Anglican prelates have since taken to issuing dispensations on special occasions, generally with the not unnecessary qualification, "as far as We have the power to do so."

But how could I possibly go on in a position so palpably false and illogical? In spite of all my Roman leanings there was a deep-rooted prejudice against the Papacy and its claims, which was based on the erroneous historical theories on which I had been brought up.

But the attempt "to be Roman Catholic without the Pope" was a pretty forlorn one, and I could never divest myself altogether of misgivings and doubts. Still, I did my best for some time. I assisted at Benediction and other Catholic services in the chapels of various Anglican convents—we even had the full Holy Week ceremonies in one of them, and I, as deacon, had to sing the *Exultet*. I remember I had scruples about openly praying *pro beatissimo Papa nostro Leone*, and thought that at least the *nostro* had better be left out, but I was over-ruled in this. Next year, however, I was startled to hear the officiant sing *pro beatissimo Patriarcha nostro Eduardo*—"Our most blessed Patriarch Edward," being, of course, Dr. Benson, Archbishop of Canterbury! All this must seem to the majority of my readers to be most unreal, and a playing with sacred things. Yet, in spite of my doubts, I am not conscious of having acted in bad faith. Still I felt the position was false, and longed for something more solid and true.

The fact was, I suppose, that the hour of grace had not yet dawned. Doubtless it was delayed by my sins and infidelities. Indeed if God had mercy on me at last it was, I know, on account of the many prayers which His faithful servants ceased not to offer for my conversion. Once when I felt more than usually

unhappy I sat down and wrote an anonymous appeal to many of the convents of Catholic contemplative Orders, such as Benedictines, Carmelites, and Poor Clares. My letter ran somewhat as follows :—"A deacon of the Church of England in grave doubt as to his position humbly begs the prayers of your Community that God would enlighten and guide him aright." Since my conversion, I have been told by members of several of these communities that my request was not unheeded. It was certainly not fruitless.

In spite of all my misgivings I prepared for and received priest's orders at the end of the year of diaconate. For a short time I was very happy in the conviction that I was a priest. It is true that Ordination had been a time of trial on account of the Protestant nature of the whole proceeding. The good Bishop who ordained me was a pious Evangelical, who certainly had no intention of ordaining sacrificing priests. On the contrary, from his address one could not gather that there was any essential difference between what he called "the second order of ministry" and the first. He was careful, however, to give me a special warning against attempting to hear confessions. I was distressed by hearing some of my fellow-candidates discussing the doctrine of the Real Presence, the evening before the Ordination. They had little or no belief in it, and I remember thinking what a terrible thing it was that they were about to be entrusted with the guardianship of the Blessed Sacrament, and ordained to offer a sacrifice in which they had no belief. Terrible, indeed, it would have been had there

been any real ground for my anxiety ! I was the only candidate, I think, who remained fasting for the Ordination Service, and it was certainly not easy to do so, for it was not over till about two o'clock. The Bishop invited us to lunch afterwards, and we sat down to a table groaning with flesh and fowl, though it was a fast-day.

Still I thought I was a priest, and that compensated for everything. I said my "first Mass" in the chapel of a Sisterhood, and everything was arranged to be as like the real thing as possible. I actually said the three Masses which Catholic Bishops impose on their ordinands, to be said after their first Mass, in honour of the Holy Ghost, our Blessed Lady, and for the faithful departed. How horrified the good bishop would have been, had he known ! I even tried to get Leslie to sympathise in my joy. His answer was uncompromising, and, as I thought, unsympathetic ; but it was probably a much needed corrective. "I cannot say how much I have felt it all," he wrote, "in a way which you from your position cannot understand. But now all that has most meaning to you sounds utterly empty and meaningless to me, even the very words and expressions which you use. My great consolation is the thought that, at any rate, you have made an oblation of yourself to God—and I feel I can at least pray that you will some day be content to submit your individual judgment to the authority of the Church. God knows how I *do* sympathise with Anglicans. Probably I pray for this more than for anything else, that the certainty I now feel may never make me forget all that I had to go through. You

must see that there cannot be the same old relation between us with regard to spiritual things. The position which you lay claim to cannot appear to me to be anything but false and meaningless,—and if that be so, we may continue to love each other, as, indeed, we must—but still the same old intercourse can never be quite the same.

“ You know quite well how difficult it is for me to write this. It is but the same thought which is fixed on my mind with regard to all, even my family. Amongst Catholics there is a love which can only be explained by the fact that we are fed by the same sacraments. But between a Catholic and a High Churchman, I am afraid that certain expressions are all that are common to both.”

These words were very bitter to me at the time, but they were a bitter medicine which I greatly needed. And indeed it was not long before my old doubts returned with redoubled force. And they were so much more painful now. I could not stand at the altar without the torturing thoughts: “ What if this is all a sham ? ” “ What if you are really no priest at all ? ” My work became a misery, and though, of course, I shook it off at times, yet the burden of pain and anxiety grew ever harder to bear. But, thank God, it was not to last for long, for I was nearing the end.

Meanwhile my old Elsdon friend, Johnson, had settled down in a London curacy, and I saw a good deal of him. I say “ settled down,” but that is just what he had *not* done. His doubts had only increased in strength, and he was of the greatest help to me during this time of trial. He was of far higher intellec-

tual power than myself, and had the faculty of thoroughly mastering any subject which interested him. He threw himself into the study of the Roman controversy with the ardour and enthusiasm peculiar to him. His keen intellect speedily discovered errors, unmasked sophisms, dispelled illusions. To him I owed the downfall of the historical spectre which so daunted me. He showed me that the weight of history was all on the Roman side, and not, as I had thought, on the Anglican, that it was the Anglican controversialists, not the Roman, who were dishonest and untrustworthy. He demolished, once for all, the credit of Dr. Littledale, and laughed at the sophisms of the Superior and Brethren of my Society. He got me to read books such as Manning's *Temporal Mission of the Holy Ghost*, and *Privilegium Petri*, Waterworth's *Faith of Catholics*, Newman's *Development*, and the *Apologia*. These books had an immense influence on my mind. The mists of prejudice which had so long hid from my eyes the form of the Catholic Church in all her truth and beauty, gradually melted away. Yet Johnson himself was not convinced. For one thing he could not see any possibility of doubt as to Anglican Orders. I will permit myself to quote part of one of his letters as it expresses so well both my position and his own :—

“Who is schismatical or heretical, Rome or England? If England is right, then Rome is in schism, and especially the promulgation of the Infallibility is the most violent act of schism ever perpetrated. Also, we must suppose that the usurpations of Popes held the Church in a Babylonian captivity until the

blessed Luther, and that the Church was an unwilling captive. If *willing* (and history tells us that the Church gave the Pope his powers) the whole Western Church was schismatic.

"Yet the Roman Church is the Church of saints and doctors, the only Church who has shown herself to be a Church by teaching, by unswerving orthodoxy, by definitions of doctors and discipline. There is no break in her history, no heresy in her system.

"And while the Roman Church since her Reformation has flourished in saints, the English Church has steadily decayed. She has had "good men" among her Bishops and clergy, she has been an obedient servant to her chosen lord the King (and Parliament), she has kept off open infidelity by saying 'you needn't believe very much; and that little had better be quite indefinite.' She is not committed to heresy, simply because one cannot be quite certain what she means by her Articles. But she has habitually taught heresy; and her Articles only avoid heresy by a miracle.

"I can't conceive how it is possible to hold the view (which began in Laud's time, and which was never held in the Church till then) that the visible Church may consist of several bodies which hate each other and call each other heretics and schismatics. The Greeks don't hold the view, and never did. No one supposes that the early Church did."

It was in answer to a letter of this kind that I wrote as follows: "God bless you and keep you in His own patience, and bring us to His own peace It is clear we mustn't go beyond our convictions and

we must act up to them whatever they are . . . of course we cannot expect to shake off three centuries of practical infidelity in fifty years ! Go to the saints and to our Blessed Mother ; they cannot lead you wrong. It is only at the feet of Mary that we shall learn anything of the hidden marvels of the Passion. Love her with all your heart and soul ! Is it possible that the Perfect Son can grudge the love we give His Mother ? *Ama et fac quod vis.* "Not to have recourse to Mary is almost to admit the Protestant theory that she is on the side of Rome. If she *is*, so am I, or so I will be soon, please God."

And indeed it was Mary who took me by the hand and led me home at last. On my first visit to Belgium I had picked up in an old curiosity shop a little old oak statuette of Notre Dame de Foy, a Madonna greatly venerated in olden days, though her shrine has fallen into neglect since the Revolution. I had this beautiful Gothic image suitably enshrined, and during the month of May, kept a lamp burning constantly before it. And it was on the last day of our Lady's month that I left England for a Catholic land, and that I for the last time took part in a Protestant service !

After all the misery I had experienced, a rest and change had become necessary, and it was with a feeling of relief that I set off for a long holiday on the Continent. I was to go to Ober-Ammergau (as it was the year of the Passion Play), and other delightful places, and it was a relief to get rid of Anglicanism and all its difficulties for a time at any rate. During the month of Mary I had been very unhappy. I took

to going often to a Catholic Church some little distance from my parish, where I would pray before a beautiful altar of our Lady of Perpetual Succour. Many were the votive tapers that I burned there. In my distress I had even gone to the length of calling on a priest,* who was renowned even among Anglicans, for his learning, but each time that I called I found him out. Even now I am not quite sure that I did not go against my conscience in taking this step, which filled me with fears and anxieties. I had been so constantly warned against speaking to a priest, that I had quite absurd fears of acting wrongly in doing so. However, after I had twice tried unsuccessfully to see the priest, I thought it was a sign I was not meant to see him, and I desisted from the attempt.

It was in this frame of mind that I left England. As I said to a friend, I felt like a schoolboy on a holiday. I laid aside my clerical garb, as I did not wish to be taken either for a Protestant minister or for a Catholic priest.

I went to Bruges and spent Trinity Sunday there. I thought of going to Liege for Corpus Christi, as I thought it would be interesting to spend the feast at the place where it first arose. But an English Catholic layman whom I met at the hotel told me that the solemnity and the procession would take place on the Sunday after, and advised me to go for the feast to Maredsous, the Benedictine Abbey where I had been the year before. So at the last moment I made up

* The late Father Bridgett, C.S.S.R.

my mind to do so, and to stay there just for the one night. I sent on my luggage to Dinant, and took a knapsack with just what was sufficient for the night. I was received most cordially by the Fathers, and at once offered a room in the Abbey. The year before I had stayed at the hotel.

It was the eve of Corpus Christi, and great preparations were being made for the procession which was to pass through a wood belonging to the Abbey, where a beautiful altar of Repose was being erected.

The next morning I rose at 3.30 in order to assist at Matins. The great event of the day was, of course, the High Mass and procession. I may quote the description I wrote of it in my diary:—

“The day had been threatening rain, but mercifully it held off, and the sun shone through the painted windows on the frescoed walls and the choir of monks. The altar was richly adorned with flowers, and round and upon it were burning many tapers.

After the Pontifical Mass the procession began to form; it was indeed superb, never have I seen anything so beautiful. We were all given long tapers as large as altar candles. First came a banner of St. Benedict, followed by the boys of the Abbey school who are not in the choir. Then a brass band which had come from a neighbouring village. Afterwards followed the procession proper. It was in this order:

First two boys with baskets of flowers, then the Sub-Deacon bearing the cross, acolytes, the choir boys, the lay-brothers, the oblates, the novices, the secular priests of the neighbourhood, the monks in their black cowls, followed by the cantors in white

cofes ; then more monks in chasuble or cope, the priest-assistant bearing the Abbot's crozier, thurifers, torchbearers, and acolytes strewing flowers before the Blessed Sacrament, and then the Lord Abbot bearing the Host under a baldacchino borne by four brothers, with four more carrying processional lanterns.

On leaving the church mortars were fired off, and the bells rang out merrily. We entered the boys' playground, the school was wreathed in evergreens, the porch was made into a chapel, with an altar, and sacred pictures and images filled the windows. Shrubs and pictures were ranged outside with many tapers. Triumphal arches spanned the way, until we entered the beautiful wood. How like heaven it was, following Jesus through those leafy glades, escorted by the sons of St. Benedict ! I was intensely happy. And so we carried our Lord through His own woods, and His little birds sang their welcome to Him from the trees, while the sun, that had been hidden almost all day, shone brightly out, as we reached the open space where stood the altar of repose. It was very beautiful, elevated on more than a dozen steps, with a lofty Gothic altar-piece, and throne, and the ground was carpeted, and all was hemmed round with flowers and shrubs, while many tapers twinkled in the noonday sunshine. Here the Abbot mounted the steps and placed our Lord on the throne, while the monks knelt in a circle round the space in front. Kneeling benches were provided at one side for the guests, the banners were grouped picturesquely among the trees, while the

peasants lined the walks that led to the spot. Now we all join in the *Tantum ergo*, the Sacred Host is censed, and the Abbot sings the Collect, and gives the triple Benediction with the Host.

Then we return by another way, while we sing the *Laudate* and *Adoremus*, and as we pass along the leafy glades, here and there, as before, we come upon some holy image placed amidst a bower of trees, or on some sacred emblem or text illuminated on a shield. I noticed, among others, *Ecce Veni, O Emmanuel; Benedic Dne juvenibus alumnis scholæ abbatialis; Fili Mariæ miserere nobis.*

We reach the church again; the mortars are fired, and the bells ring out merrily, while again we bow the head as the Lord Abbot raises the Host aloft and blesses his children. Then the Blessed Sacrament is placed upon a throne over the High altar. There is exposition every day during the Octave between High Mass and Vespers."

I was easily persuaded to stay another night at the Abbey, but settled I must leave next day, so as to reach Liège on Saturday. I was then going on to Ober-Ammergau. I remember looking out the trains next morning, before the high Mass. It was Friday, June 6, the feast of St. Norbert. The last entry in my diary (where I kept a minute record of all that struck me in the ceremonies and monastic customs), runs as follows:—"The bell is ringing for High Mass, and I must go."

Two years later I added to my diary the following account of what happened at that Mass:—

"Ah! that High Mass! I little thought when I

wrote those last words two years ago—"I must go"—what I was going to! That High Mass was the crisis of my life, the turning point of my history. I knelt at the very end of the great Church in order to hear the music better. It was here God's message came to me. As I knelt there during the *Credo*, the words "*Et unam sanctam Catholicam et Apostolicam Ecclesiam*" smote on my ear, and pierced into my very soul. God illuminated me then with a vivid light, by which I saw that up to this moment I had *not* believed in *One*, holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church.

I had not seen till then that *one means one and no more*. But it came home to me at last, and as I knelt there, almost unconscious of all that passed, in a state of extraordinary agitation and yet of strange peace, the truth that had burst on me so suddenly slowly took possession of me. But even yet I doubted. It was possible, I thought, that this was a diabolical illusion, at least it *might* be so. I asked for a sign. I said, "If Father Abbot sends for me to speak to me before dinner, or if he sends someone else to speak to me about my soul, I will open all my heart to him—if not, I will go away this evening and say nothing." The Mass ended, the Blessed Sacrament was exposed and I still knelt there in the church. No one came to me. I stayed there till just before dinner. Then I went upstairs to wash my hands, and felt almost relieved that it was all over, and I determined to go away that afternoon. On going into the Refectory, however, Dom C——, an Irish monk whose acquaintance I had made the evening before, touched me on

the arm, and said—"Will you come for a walk with me after Vespers?"

I said, "Yes, gladly, if there will be time before I leave." So after Vespers we went out, and we had not gone far when he began asking me about the Bishop of Lincoln's case. "Now," I thought, "I am in for it." However, I answered; and he began to attack the Anglican position pretty hardly, I defending it as best I could. We went into a wood, and all of a sudden I turned round to him, and said, "Dom C——, tell me, did the Abbot send you to talk to me about this?" "Yes," he replied, after a moment's hesitation. "And when did he tell you to speak to me—before dinner?" "Yes, after the High Mass, he sent for me and told me I must speak to you about your soul. I did not like to do it, but I have done it by obedience."

I said no more, but it came upon me with overwhelming force that my sign had been granted me when I least expected it. . . . I think, that after that, though I still continued to feebly defend myself, all was over. Before we returned to the Monastery I had promised to speak to the Abbot. Next morning I was with him from 9 to 11 in the forenoon. That afternoon Dom C—— took me to see Mr. B——, an English Catholic gentleman, and a most learned man, who was staying in the abbey. He was very kind, and helped me more than anyone. Of course he best understood my position and my difficulties. But these last were purely moral ones, scruples as to whether I was taking enough time

about it, whether I was being headstrong, or giving way to sentiment and so on.

I had, however, one violent struggle still to go through. I was kneeling in the Abbey Church before the image of St. Benedict, reciting the *Salve Regina*. Suddenly I distinctly heard an interior voice saying to me, "What folly all this is! Give up praying to the Virgin, and all this unreality, and go back to your work." The thing was so vivid, that I trembled all over, and was bathed in a cold perspiration. I took holy water and prayed before a picture of our Lady of Perpetual Succour, but still the horror clung to me. It seemed to tell me that I should be damned, that I had been following my own self-will for years, and that this was the final catastrophe. Even now when I think of that half hour, I tremble. At last I went to the Abbot, a saintly old man, who was most fatherly and tender to me. He noticed my agitation, and bade me tell him all. And as I told him the temptation passed away. He smiled and said, "I am very glad of this, if all had gone too smoothly I should have been alarmed about you. It is the same with my novices. If they are violently tempted against their vocation I think it is a good sign, it shows the devil sees they are in the right way and is making efforts to get hold of them." And I said, "Yes, and I think even at the worst, I knew it was the devil, for he over-reached himself by calling our Blessed Lady 'the Virgin,' and telling me to give her up."

And so every day the dear old Abbot used to instruct me, and reply most patiently and exhaustively to

all my difficulties and scruples. He showed me what faith really was, and he led me to the love of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

I find I wrote in my diary, during these days, the following notes : " Faith is a divine grace, planted in our hearts by God. He alone can give it us. Sin can extinguish it. Predestination is a great mystery—our unworthiness makes us shrink, but He has done so many miracles for us in the past, we ought to have confidence. ' *Salvum me fecit quoniam voluit me,* ' not because I deserved it."

And so in a few days my doubts were set at rest, and one morning I went into the Abbot's cell, and kneeling at his feet begged him to receive me into the Church. It was on this day, I think, that I wrote the following profession of faith :—

" In the Name of Jesus Christ. Amen."

Prostrate at the feet of Almighty God I profess that, aided by His Grace, and relying on the merits of Jesus Christ, I desire to live and die in the Communion of the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Roman Church, because I believe that in this Church alone is to be found the Truth, and because there is no salvation save in the one Church of God. O Lord I believe, help thou mine unbelief !

O Mother of Perpetual Succour help me !

Holy Father Benedict, pray for me !

Most glorious Martyrs of England, intercede for me !

It may easily be imagined that my great trouble now was how my parents would take the news which would be such a shock to them. But here, again, God was very merciful to me. My dear father wrote

more than kindly—"My dearest and fondest blessing on you at this awful time. Anything I can do, I will to soften the blow to your mother and sisters. You need all the assistance and all the good will, and you shall have mine.

"I knew and I know that you would never be happy with us. I am sure no one with our views ever is. May God bless you and help you, and comfort you. . . . A man who acts after the dictates of his conscience is a brave man, and I can only admire him."

My reception into the Church took place on the Feast of the Venerable Bede, the same great English Saint who had saved me from the shipwreck five years before. Three months later I took the habit of St. Benedict in the Abbey where I had found the faith. To my inexpressible joy my father followed me into the Holy Catholic Church in a little over a year from my conversion. Other members of my family, and several of my friends, have since been led to the fold.

But no conversion, save my father's, gave me greater joy than that of Johnson. When he received my letter telling him that I was about to be received, he went to his vicar and told him that he must resign his curacy. The step I had taken seemed to make such a course practical, for up till then he had looked upon it as something theoretically inevitable, but not immediately urgent. He left London, and lived in retirement for some months, deeply studying the great question from every point of view. And then, at last, he moved, and when he did so all was

quickly settled. And so on a great Feast of our Blessed Lady, about six months after my own reception, I got a note from him :—"I was received into the Catholic Church this morning, and shall make my first Communion to-morrow Pray for me!" Soon I had the joy of welcoming him to the great monastery where I had found my true home.

Leslie wrote full of joyful congratulations, and he soon came to see me in my monastic home. Both he and Johnson became priests, in different religious orders. I will end with a quotation from a letter the latter wrote to me soon after his conversion :—

"As for your two converts, I heard Mass for them. I trust God will not let them delay long. I know what it is better than you do. It would be a great thing to have nothing to regret—and yet it seems almost more to God's glory when I look back, that God should have led me in the right way, in spite of my sins, in spite of my resistance. He dealt with me just in the same way when He brought me first to love Him—brought me in a few months from absolute worldliness and skin-deep religion, into the desire to give myself up to Him. It certainly is a wonderful thing to be able to look back and see how God has brought one on from grace to grace, without oneself—simply miraculous—changing my will, it seems to me, without my doing anything; making me pray, and then answering my prayer; making me love Him, and then answering my love—which is not worthy to be called love, except that I cannot make little of His gift—by His own infinite love and mercy. . . . And now as to Benedictines,

I wish to tell you candidly that I never thought of caring for them until I came to you but I think I see now that it is not an individual Order with a single object, and endowed with a spiritual legacy of one sainted founder, but it is the Order of Orders, and the simple undiluted monastic life—simply the community life and the holocaust to God of self. And that is why you can say of it that it is the spirit of the Church which animates it—for it is a picture of the Church in an abstract form. Other Orders are pictures of certain virtues—poverty, orthodoxy, obedience, zeal for souls—while the monks proper are given up to the *Pax Domini* which is the harmony of all virtues, the centre of all activity, and includes the springs of all virtues and all activities in itself. And thus it is again different from the mere contemplatives who do not translate their contemplation into action. I do not say for an instant that anyone of these is the highest life. I suppose ‘religion’ in general is the highest life; and within religion it is dangerous to make distinctions and exalt the missionary or the contemplative, or the mixed in such wise as to debase any of the others. I do not say St. Peter is below St. John. What can be a higher vocation than “*Tu me sequere?*” Yet what is a more wondrous privilege than “*Sic te volo manere donec veniam?*” Pray for me, and I for you—*ut videntes Jesum semper collaetemur* for after all that is all we care about, isn’t it?”

Long years have passed since these lines were written, and the years have brought many changes—But they have not brought disillusionment or regret.

Rather, on the contrary, every succeeding year has brought increasing gladness and growing thankfulness to Him who, thus wondrously led us out of the City of Confusion into the City of Peace. The three friends whose lives were thus closely linked together now work and pray with one heart, one mind, one aim. We were ordained priests abroad, Leslie and I in Rome and Johnson in Belgium. But after our ordination we were sent back to our native land. Here I have found a new monastic home, not to be compared in splendour or in size with the great Belgian Abbey where I gained the faith and passed my noviciate, but equally dear to me, because in all essential things the same.—“Let us, therefore, praise the Lord for His goodness, and declare the wonders that He doeth unto the children of men.”

And thus I end the simple story of a struggle and a victory ; feeling that it is good “to declare the secrets of the King,” and give one’s testimony to the joy and peace which flow from submission to the truth of God.

D. B. C.

A JOURNEY

TO

THE CITY OF PEACE.



I AM an old woman now, and God has answered my prayer that I might live a Catholic as long as I had lived a Protestant. I had scarcely thought that a record of my conversion could be of use, but I am told that the experience of one human being may aid some other, and therefore I take courage to speak of the "great things the Lord hath done for my soul"

Born of Protestant parents, in Ireland, and at a time when religious prejudice was stronger and deeper than it is now, guarded from Catholic influences, and misinformed as to the Catholic religion, my prospect of entering the true Fold would, in my childhood and youth have, humanly speaking, seemed very small, yet in looking back I can see traces of God's merciful guidance. I remember with a kind of amusement that in my nursery days, I and a brother or sister near to me in age, had a scheme of writing to our Lady on the subject of some childish grievance. Our letter, we thought, might be entrusted to the

Archangel Gabriel by a Catholic maid who, to do her justice, had never made an attempt to enlighten our minds, but our plan was not carried out, for we were as yet strangers to the use of pen and ink.

My mother was a most deeply religious woman. I cannot imagine a character more conscientious and singleminded than hers. The Bible was her rule and standard, the will of God, or what she believed to be His will, her only law ; deliberation as to obedience to that will would have seemed an impossibility. Her care for her children was constant and unremitting, and the influence of such a character was necessarily great. To my youthful conscience nothing was too small to be a matter of right or wrong ; a good knowledge of Holy Scripture, and a certain acquaintance with the practices of self-examination and of meditation are among the benefits which, as a Catholic, I feel I have to thank her for. Even in my childish days, however, there was a want which the religion in which I was brought up did not attempt to supply, for I remember asking how I could know that God had forgiven me. To this important question the answer was vague. The Low Church, or as it was called, the Evangelical, phase of Protestantism in which I was reared may, I think, be said to have carried with it, if not its antidote, at least a possible corrective, inasmuch as the right, and even the duty of private judgment, of proving all things by the Word of God, were in theory, strongly insisted on. Inconsistently enough, however, many who advocated the principle, ignored the possibility of a conscientious exercise of private judg-

ment leading to any conclusion but their own. "Judge for yourself, but agree with me," was too often virtually the maxim. I remember a dear old lady, of a type now I believe extinct, who could only explain a conversion ascribed by its subject to the study of the Gospel, by the assertion that the convert had "read the Bible backwards."

By God's goodness what I heard against the Catholic religion made no great impression on me. Long before I knew what the Church was, I disliked the attempts at Proselytism then too common in Ireland, and felt that it would be very dangerous to unsettle the faith of another, not from a conviction that that faith was absolutely right, but from a dread of the effect on the mind of giving up that which had been firmly held

Luther was obnoxious to me, because he broke his vow of chastity, for I argued that even if conscience compelled him to renounce his religion there was no reason that he should break a promise not in itself sinful. Stories circulated in my childhood of Catholics who had held Protestant doctrines, or what would have been styled Evangelical Truth, did not call forth my sympathy, for the position of such persons seemed to me manifestly dishonest.

A habit of arguing prevailed amongst us as a family, arguing I mean, as a sort of amusement or intellectual exercise; if any opinion were expressed it was not unlikely that some one would suggest the considerations that might be urged on the other hand. The practice of course has its dangers, and yet I think it may have been of use even in religious

matters, in enabling one to see the other side of some questions.

It now seems to me strange that I more or less accepted the religious teaching that came in my way, and till childhood was past did not definitely question any part of it. Perhaps, this was because no special decision was required from me. After a certain course of reading with my mother I went to Communion, no clergyman having intervened in my preparation. I was not confirmed as an Anglican until several years later, and then merely by my own desire.

The theory of conversion as a sensible and sudden process necessary to be experienced before anyone could be truly a Christian, was about the first Protestant opinion that I discarded, and this, of course, cleared the way for belief in Baptismal regeneration. While still very young I spent some time in the south of Spain for the benefit of my health, and here I inevitably saw something of Catholic life. Feeling, however, that I could not join in Catholic worship, I deemed it somewhat irreverent to go to Catholic churches as a mere sight-seer, and I seldom went, but I remember being deeply impressed by the *Miserere* in the Cathedral at Malaga on an evening in Holy Week. By this time the Catholic religion attracted me strangely; I felt that if I looked into it closely I should become a Catholic, and, in perfect good faith, as far as I know myself, I avoided looking into it. The state of mind in which this was possible seems to me now incomprehensible if not incredible, but so it was with me.

The first Catholic practice that I adopted was that of praying for the dead. The death of an invalid, who, like myself, was seeking health in a southern clime, and the sorrow of his sister with whom I had become intimate, brought home to my mind the immense comfort of such prayer, and I saw the usual Protestant objections to be groundless.

Time went on, and not long after my return to England we spent some years at Torquay, where I first came in the way of High Church Anglicanism. The different churches in that town may be said to have exemplified the varieties of doctrine or opinion then contained in the Church of England. When I could, I found great pleasure in attending the services at St. John's, the High Church church. Here I often heard the touching and impressive sermons preached by Father Yard, at that time a devout and advanced Anglican. Catholic doctrines as set forth by the High Church school at once took hold of my mind, and, in my case, this implied not so much a change as a completing and filling up of my former religious belief. Each truth seemed to find its place and to fit in, so to speak, like the portion of some mosaic or dissected picture. I read the writings of R. J. Wilberforce, of Dr. Pusey and Keble, and used the Devotions of Bishop Andrews and the adapted Paradise of the Christian Soul. At this time, and for long afterwards, the poetical aspect of the Catholic religion had a great charm for me and I delighted in legends. By-and-bye I went to Confession; this was a necessary consequence of a belief in the power of the Keys. Father Yard,

as he afterwards became, heard me, and I felt extremely happy after the accomplishment of this act, though great distress and trouble from external sources were its consequence. Of the confession I have nothing to say, I had none of the strange and distressing experiences of some Anglicans. Father Yard's piety and tact probably made all as easy as a general confession outside the Church could well be.

For years I continued to be an extreme High Church woman in heart, but was, after we returned to my home in Ireland, deprived of much that I had learned to value. There was little to satisfy me in the services of our parish church. Some well-meant efforts for their improvement led to trouble and misunderstanding. The curate who ministered there was in many ways a worthy man, and was kind to the poor, but was in the fullest, if not the most aggressive sense of the word, a Protestant. I do not think, however, that this state of things had much effect on me. I read my High Church books, and corresponded with High Church friends, and held on to the Church of England, believing it to be a part of the Church of Christ, but with little or none of the special affection which many of its members have felt for it. I had no doubt of the truth of the Catholic Church, even while I failed to recognise her claims on my submission. The dream of the re-union of Christendom came under my notice, and the Branch fable was made known to me. But at last the ground gave way under my feet. The Catholic Church rose up before me as the one reality. It was like

the stone in the vision of Baltassar and of Daniel, which "became a great mountain and filled the whole earth." Still I tarried. Unfortunately I was allowed to consult some of the High Church authorities. Mr. Keble wrote me a beautiful letter on the dispositions with which the study of religious difficulties should be approached, and at the same time suggested that any Roman, Greek, or Anglican Christian ought to remain where he was. I replied to this letter and waited for further help, but it never came. After a while I went to England and saw Dr. Pusey. He was most kind and considerate, and entered into my difficulties. I cannot now remember clearly in detail what passed. I think among other things I found the Royal Supremacy to be an objection to the Church of England,—and I think he told me he had gone into that matter and had written on it. I went to confession and I was kept back and induced to believe that I ought to stay where I was. Naturally I had a great respect for one who was held in such esteem. It almost seemed as if those whom I loved and respected as far superior to myself could hardly be left in error, and so even my better feelings were more or less enlisted on the wrong side. Perhaps the attempt to lead a pious life on Catholic lines tended to divert my attention from the great matter which ought first to have been settled.

But, thank God, I could not always rest in this state. My doubts and difficulties revived. Dr. Pusey, to whom I used to write for advice and instruction, bid me wait for his Eirenicon. When the Eirenicon

came I do not think it made any difference to me. I went abroad again, this time for the health of a sister, to the South of France. After spending a short time at Bagnères de Bigorre, we went to Pau, where we spent several winters. From the time I went to France I constantly attended Catholic churches, now as a worshipper, yet feeling myself an outcast. At Bagnères, in the beautiful church of the Carmelite Fathers, I first heard a Catholic sermon. It was on the occasion of a religious profession. I remember that a Protestant acquaintance, who accompanied me, seemed shocked to see me drop a little contribution into the alms-bag that was carried round. The sermon was very striking, but had, of course, no special bearing on my case.

A very High Church clergyman and his wife, whom I had known at Torquay, were now at Pau. They had an oratory in their villa, and I used to go to Communion there on Sunday mornings. The Anglican places of worship at Pau at that time were not to my taste, though I attended one of them pretty regularly. I went to confession to this High Church clergyman, who was a most amiable man; before I went to confession I entered into an understanding with his wife that I was not to speak to him of my doubts concerning the Church of England and my leanings to Rome. His own state of mind was but too similar to mine, but I grieve to say that he died without being received into the True Fold. The first time that I went to confession to him I remember that he was disquieted because I could not give the number of the faults of which I had to accuse myself.

As this confession covered a period of three or four years, perhaps the imperfection was not extraordinary ; the next time, however, as but a few weeks had elapsed, I was able to give a more satisfactory account of my failings.

With my friend, the wife of this clergyman, I visited some of the convents at Pau. The Sœurs de Nevers have a house there where a number of young girls are brought up. The Reverend Mother of this house saw a likeness between me and a friend of hers, and, accordingly, took an interest in me, and began to pray for me. She has long since gone to her reward, and I have no doubt that her prayers contributed to my conversion.

A gifted and zealous young English priest was at this time at Pau, and was ministering to the English-speaking Catholics, and had already been the instrument of many conversions. Two ladies, a mother and daughter, with whom I had been acquainted in England, had been received by him into the Church some time before the period of which I am writing, and were devout and fervent converts. They came to Pau before I had been long there, and I, of course, was glad to renew my intercourse with them. They soon found out something of my state of mind, and charitably did their best to promote my conversion. At their house I frequently met the priest I have mentioned, who joined his efforts with theirs. I fear I tried the patience of these good friends dreadfully by my delay. It seems to me now that it must have been my own fault, and yet I cannot say that I knowingly disobeyed the

will of God. I felt that I should end by being a Catholic, and I studied Latin with a view to its future usefulness, but I believed that grace was given me in what I looked upon as sacraments in the English Church, and I felt that to leave it would be to deny that grace. Passages in the Gospel of St. John. in which our Lord speaks strongly of unity, deeply impressed me. I saw that Christians ought to be one, but were not. I went often to Catholic sermons. The teaching of the Church with regard to sin was to me very consolatory, for, probably like many other Anglicans, I had not clearly grasped the difference between temptation and sin. I often heard sermons in the old Church of St. Martin at Pau and often when I saw people going to confession, after the sermon, felt inclined to follow their example; I was now, and had long been, fairly familiar with Catholic doctrines. These had always attracted and satisfied me. I had never any difficulties about believing anything taught by the Church. The doctrine of the Immaculate Conception, indeed, which I did not properly understand, caused me at one time a little perplexity. I spoke very little of my state of feeling to any one. I did not wish to say a word that could unsettle another while I myself was uncertain as to what I ought to do. If it was occasionally suggested to me that I could not accept such and such a Catholic practice or doctrine, the answer to my mind was clear. If I saw that I must become a Catholic, I should, of course, believe and accept everything, and if I should not become a Catholic I could judge what I would or would not

accept. The one question was whether I should take the decisive step or not. I was extremely unhappy. I wished to do the Will of God, and I could not see what His Will was. Those who have always been Catholic, sometimes seem to think that a convert has done something great, almost heroic, in entering the Church; my feeling rather has been that the misery of uncertainty is such that in self-defence one must do something.

About this time an event occurred which cast dismay into the hearts of my charitable friends. Dr. Pusey, who was travelling in France, spent a few days at Pau. Again I consulted him, again I went to confession, and while he spoke I was in some measure satisfied. But before he had left the place my troubles returned. His coming was a good thing for me, for now I could hope for nothing more than the Church of England. The priest of whom I have spoken sent a great parcel of Catholic books to help me. Amongst them were some of Cardinal Wiseman's Lectures, and in particular some, I think, regarding the Donatists, which were considered likely to be of use to me. I said to myself, the Gospel is preached to the poor, there must be some shorter way into the Kingdom of Heaven than the study of so many books. I prayed and, particularly as Lent came on, begged God to let me know His Will at least by Easter. I had been invoking our Lady and St. Augustine for some time. Some one mentioned to my father, who was in Ireland, that I was often seen in Catholic churches, and he wrote to me in a tone of kindly remonstrance. I told him

that I was not satisfied with the Church of England, and felt that I must seek further instruction, begging his blessing on my course. To this letter I had a most kind and affectionate answer, and so my way was made easier than I could have hoped. At last the end of my difficulties arrived. On Palm Sunday I had occasion to speak to the priest whom I have so often mentioned on a matter concerning another person which caused me much anxiety. I went into the Sacristy of the Hospice at Pau after Mass with no intention of speaking of my own personal troubles; indeed, I remember meeting one of my convert friends in the chapel, and saying in answer to some kind words of hers, "It is not what you think." But after the priest had attended to the business on which I came, he asked plainly why I did not enter the Church, and I told him plainly the one reason which kept me back, viz., my belief that God had given me grace in the sacraments of the English Church. He, of course, explained to me that this might be, that God might hear one's sincere prayers and grant grace as in a spiritual communion, nor was I required to deny this in any way. There was no difficulty now to keep me back any longer. I had reached the home to which my steps had so long and with so many delays been tending, but I had always, when I foresaw the probability of my ultimate conversion, determined to let my father (now my only surviving parent), know before I took the final step, and to this resolution I adhered, though I was urged to be received at once, and not run the risk of encountering contrary arguments and persuasions.

66 A JOURNEY TO THE CITY OF PEACE.

I am glad I did this, though, of course, it is a different thing to meet difficulties with the grace and help of the sacraments from meeting them as it were alone. My letter actually, through no fault of mine, was delayed beyond the time I had intended.

Finally, on Easter Tuesday, 1866, I was received into the True Fold in the chapel of the Hospice at Pau, and there had on the following day the great blessing of making my First Communion.

“What shall I render to the Lord for all He hath done to me?”

A. W. C.

ANGLICAN ORDERS:

THEIR

VALIDITY TESTED.



AFTER spending four years at Oxford, and taking his degree, the writer of this simple story went to the Theological College of Cuddesdon, situated some seven miles from the University.

Cuddesdon at that time contained twenty-three students, who made one year's course of study before receiving Anglican ordination. This was quite a voluntary matter, for the vast majority of candidates were ordained immediately on taking a B.A. Degree. My parents had early decided that I should enter the clerical profession, and I may as well frankly confess that up to this time, I merely regarded the clerical profession as on a par with any other. It had been arranged for me, there was money in it, and as comfortable a life as I could wish. An Anglican clergyman was excluded from no human or worldly enjoyment, nor was he called upon to make any extraordinary sacrifice of self.

This view of the matter underwent a change at Cuddesdon. The College, a structure of monastic appearance, had been built in a pretty Oxfordshire

village at the gates of the Episcopal Palace in the days of Bishop Wilberforce, whose brothers and sister became Catholics. Falling under the influence of Dr. Liddon, it had become a centre for the Catholic revival. To the impressions received there, several who are now Catholic priests or laymen, owe the grace of their conversion. The Divine Office was said daily; the doctrine of the Real Presence, and the advantages of Sacramental Confession were taught; Catholic books of devotion and biographies were passed round amongst the students. Thus, an unprejudiced mind had some opportunity of examining the Catholic religion, when on the threshold of the Christian ministry.

With me to *hear* of these doctrines meant to *try* them. It seemed unreasonable to hear of a good thing without giving it a trial. Twenty-three years of ignorant, thoughtless life at a public school and University, made the practice of Confession an act of common-sense and a real happiness. The 125th Psalm was my first penance. "When the Lord turned again the captivity of Zion, then were we like unto them that dream." My first confessor still helps souls into the Catholic Church, as an Anglican Bishop now, but the mere fact of unburdening the conscience to him, even without any sacramental absolution, was enough to enable me to realize to an extraordinary degree the words of that Psalm of consolation. The doctrine of the Immaculate Conception was known to some of us, and we accepted it, whilst many Catholic devotions became our daily practice.

There was, however, one black shadow hanging over our new spiritual vision. Was it honest to do these things in the Anglican Church? Were we, by the reception of Anglican Orders, made Catholic priests, endowed with the power of consecrating the Blessed Sacrament, of absolving penitents, and of offering the true Christian Sacrifice for sins on the Communion Table of the Established Church?

A solid doubt sat, as Banquo's ghost, at all our spiritual feasts. A few of us roamed about, like so many Macbeths, ill at ease—for do what we might, we could not lay to rest that horrible and accusing spectre. Yet ever at our elbow was the theological professor, like another Lady Macbeth, trying to "screw our courage to the sticking-place." The "continuity theory," then in its infancy, had arisen out of the necessities of the case such as we were now experiencing. The reformation of Henry VIII., and of his daughter by Anne Boleyn, was represented as a mere spring-cleaning of the Catholic Church in England, which remained the same after as before,—only purified by the zeal for God's house, which consumed the soul of Elizabeth and of Henry VIII! Anglican Orders were authoritatively declared to be Catholic and Apostolic. Each Anglican clergyman received at his Ordination those sacerdotal powers of our Lord's Priesthood, which the Catholic Church administers on earth. These declarations were necessary, because some of us were debating, whether we ought to be ordained by an Anglican, or by a Catholic Bishop. History was not our strong point then, but the lives of the Curé d'Ars, of Père

de Ravignan, of Père Lacordaire, and the spiritual writings of Père Grou, were doing their work well. These were the books we fed upon, and tried to follow. We wished to be spiritual men like the Curé of Ars ; preachers like de Ravignan and Lacordaire ; directors of souls like Father Grou ; and to say Mass like them all : because in these men, we recognised in modern times the spirit of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and we thought them the true successors of His Apostles. Where did such men obtain that spirit, and the grace to realize it ? Must we go for it to the same source as they did, to Rome ? Or could we find the same grace at a different source, in Canterbury ? To stay us from seeking the fountain-head of the river of grace at Rome, we were told by a famous ecclesiastical historian, the late Dr. Bright, who came out from Oxford on purpose, that the Anglican Establishment was a "branch" of the Catholic Church, and that Anglican Orders were not base imitations but the real, original thing.

In addition to this reading of past Church history, as regards myself, I was then under serious obligations to my parents, who had from my earliest infancy set their hearts on my becoming an Anglican clergyman, and they had gone to no small trouble to bring it about. All these reasons—amongst which a sense of the painful sacrifices involved in a change had no small part—determined me to take the benefit of the doubt.

In finally deciding to offer myself as a candidate for Anglican Orders, I argued that "the proof of every pudding is in the eating ;" that our Lord's

delegated authority to represent Him at the altar, to consecrate the Blessed Sacrament, to offer the Divine Victim, to absolve penitents, and to direct souls, could not be entrusted to any human agent, but he must be aware of the possession of these powers, at least in their effects. The humblest bank clerk, representing in a branch house the company of which he is an official, could not continually pass money over the counter without knowing that he is doing it, at least by the joy and satisfaction shown by those who take the money.

To quote here only one witness to the grace of valid orders, St. Augustine cries out :—" Oh ! ineffable dignity of a priest, in whose hands, as in the womb of the Virgin, the only-begotten Son of God again becomes incarnate." How could this dignity be mine and I not *know* it ? If I must become a minister and representative of Christ, I could only surrender myself to become a true and real one. But possession is nine-tenths of the law. I could not in such a matter, inexperienced as I then was, deviate from the path indicated to me by parental authority and the wisdom of more learned men — merely on abstract reasoning alone. An *à priori* argument at that time had little weight for a mind which had not been trained in metaphysics. Experience was my guide, and to experience I alone could trust with confidence. It was a matter of eternal life or death to myself and many others, amongst whom my clerical work would lie. I was not transgressing any known duty by offering myself for Anglican ordination—nay, I had a positive call to do so—

whereas if I hung back, I might afterwards discover that Anglican orders were valid, and the "continuity theory" true. I determined then to go on as I was, and even now I do not see that I could have done otherwise in my then state of mind. So I received deacon's orders at Gloucester Cathedral, and went to a quiet country village on the borders of Herefordshire as curate, while waiting for the momentous sacrament of the priesthood, which would enable me to exercise more fully the ministry of our Divine Lord. I began to prepare myself by prayer, fasting and discipline. "I shall know soon now," I said, "whether Anglican orders are valid or not."

Nor had I to wait long. Two years is the usual interval, but at the end of a single year a rectory fell unexpectedly vacant in Suffolk, to which my parents had the next presentation. The Rector was also lord of the manor, and, the living being private property, he was almost independent, except for such slender submission as is paid in such cases to the Protestant Bishop. I could not then have had a more perfect sphere wherein to put Anglican orders to the test than this opportunity which had been put in my way in so unlooked for a manner. Coming at such a time, when I was praying daily for such a chance, the coincidence seemed to me to be something more than fortunate. In order to enter into possession of the vacant living, I obtained permission to present myself for the higher orders at the end of one year from the diaconate. These I received, as before at Gloucester, from the Bishop of that see, whose kindness on that occasion I shall

never be able to forget. Immediately afterwards I started for Suffolk with one sole intention in my mind, viz., to put my Anglican orders to the proof. Surely when going into battle against the enemies of his salvation, that is, not merely against those of flesh and blood, but "against principalities of evil in high places," a man may be allowed first to test the "weapons of his warfare!"

This course was taken by me in good faith, with a single regard to God's greater glory, independently of self-interest. As to the latter, I may remark that every single hope of temporal good fortune now depended upon my being able to assure myself of the validity of an Anglican ordination.

The possession of a fair social position in a pleasant county, of a beautiful house and garden, of a good income, and of every enjoyment which such things could bring, depended on my proving to my own satisfaction that I was a Catholic priest. The opposite conclusion would spell utter ruin both socially and financially, as far as my prospects were then concerned.

From Gloucester I went to London for two purposes—to be clothed by a Catholic tailor as a Catholic priest, and to procure from a Catholic Church furnishing house every requisite for a Catholic altar. I at once put on the soutane, and determined to wear it indoors and out until I had proved whether I was a Catholic priest or not.

Having been inducted into the Suffolk parish, I took the text of my first sermon from the prophet Jeremias, chap. i. 6-8 :—"And I said : Ah, ah, ah, Lord God, behold I cannot speak, for I am a child. And the

Lord said to me : Say not, I am a child, for thou shall go to all that I shall send thee, and whatsoever I shall command thee, thou shalt speak. Be not afraid at their presence, for I am with thee to deliver thee, saith the Lord." I thereupon told the parishioners that I had been ordained and sent to speak the truth to them, as I believed it ; that I should do so sincerely and without human respect ; for if my position was sound, God would maintain me in it ; if false, then I should certainly fail.

On the following day, the principal church-warden called upon me to say that the people of the parish believed me to be a *Jesuit in disguise* ; that a meeting of protest had been summoned, and he would be obliged if I would attend it. The meeting took place in the vestry of the church, an old Catholic building, at the door of which a holy water stoup, with its side broken down, raised in my mind each time I passed it a fresh doubt as to where the holy waters of Grace were truly to be found ? A broken sacrament could no better than a broken water font hold the living waters of the Church of Christ.

At the meeting, I repeated what I had said before. That I could not take my Gospel from the people whom I had been sent to teach ; still to comfort them this I would say—I was no Vicar of Bray to stick to the loaves and fishes at all costs ; but that honestly if I found I was not where I ought to be, believing as I did, then I would immediately go elsewhere.

For the next twelve months I diligently sought from Holy Scripture, what the powers precisely

were which a priest of the Church of Christ ought to possess, and those powers I attempted to put to the proof at the Communion Table, and in a Confessional, which latter had been for three centuries unknown in the locality. There, was, however, one exception. A poor Irish widow in the village, the sole Catholic living there, knew all about it, and, moreover, she appeared to be not a little doubtful when I declared to her that I was exactly the same kind of clergyman as some Father Patrick who had baptized, absolved, and communicated her in the mountains of Connemara!

At the end of sixteen months, the Bishop of Norwich, on a presentment from the parish under the Public Worship Act, summoned me to his palace, to give an account of my proceedings and teaching. When I had done so he informed me, that Anglican Orders conferred no such powers as I had assumed, that, though our Lord when on earth in human form, had absolved from sin, consecrated the Blessed Sacrament, and offered a Sacrifice, yet He had not delegated those powers to His ministers, reserving them all to Himself, and that the doctrine of the Mass was a "blasphemous fable vainly conceived." He continued that it was dishonest—I already had begun to suspect this—in the Anglican Establishment to teach these Catholic doctrines and practices which I believed in, and he forbade me to do so, if I intended to remain a Protestant Minister of his diocese.

The Bishop was very kind to me, very honest and sincere: his subsequent actions proved that he only sought what was best for all parties concerned.

But at the time the episcopal prohibition raised an insuperable difficulty. The fundament basis of Christianity surely rests upon obedience to authority, and undoubtedly, where I then was, the Bishop was my lawful superior. If I persevered in teaching Catholic doctrines I must disobey, and by doing so set a public example of disobedience to others. Yet, Paradise, which had been lost by disobedience, could be regained alone by the contrary virtue!

In addition to this difficulty, I was convinced from many proofs that I was "driving the nail where it would not go;" I doubted, if I had ever made a real consecration or given a valid absolution. The results that I looked for with a professional instinct were conspicuously absent. These things being so, at the end of eighteen months, I felt bound to fulfil my promise, and accordingly I resigned the living into the hands which had so trustingly presented it to me. The Patrons, indeed, of the living, who were my own parents, were strongly opposed to my proceedings, and by siding with the Bishop against me, added additional force to my uneasiness. For sake of conscientious convictions, I was setting defiance, not only to Bishop, but to parents also. This complicated matters considerably, as I had now no authority left, but my own sweet will—a somewhat perilous condition!



IN the sunny Rhineland, on a rocky height over that beautiful river, within a stone's throw of the Apollinaris Church at Remagen, and on the Bonn side of it,

stands a charming residence in a garden, sloping upwards at the back to meet woods stretching down, which in May time are thickly strewn with lilies and anemones. It was there that the interior spirit of the Catholic faith was first born in my soul—quite a simple principle—that of supernatural obedience to divinely constituted authority.

So far mine was merely a negative attitude. In England, as Rector of an Anglican living, I had discovered by experience that it was no longer possible for me to continue such. I had found myself in fact in a dilemma, that could only be solved in one way. I must either give up my own private judgment of what was right to believe and practise, or disobey my ecclesiastical superior, the Bishop of the diocese, who claimed me as a subject.

Had he a right to formulate my rule of faith, and if so, on what ground? No definite Anglican moral theology exists to be consulted in such a case. The current opinion, however, at that time, came to this: "In matters of faith, where your private judgment, as the Rector of a parish, clashes with that of your Bishop, follow your own and educate his." Protestantism is essentially based on this principle. "We are all taught of God: your private judgment for you, his for him. If the Bishop imposes his on you, what authority has he? He might err, you be right!"

"And does the same rule hold good," I asked, "between an Anglican clergyman and a layman of his congregation?" "Certainly," was the reply, "no two members of your own flock believe as you do, or with each other."

This I knew well to my cost. Yet St. Paul did not seem to teach this system, who bids us see Christ in our superiors with fear and trembling. Moreover, why should obedience be so absolutely necessary in affairs of the body, and not be equally so in things of the spirit? St. Paul's system, in short, postulates such an infallible authority as the Bishop of Norwich neither laid claim to nor pretended to exercise. Every other problem, and there were many, paled before this one. This being settled, every other would be so also: this virtue won, every other would be planted in the soul with it. These were my thoughts, though I knew nothing as yet of Loyola's "Letter of Obedience." The happiness of that discovery was yet to come.

It was thus that the question of obedience in matters of faith led me finally to resign my Anglican cure of souls, and to leave England for Germany, the better to carry out an obligation of silence, laid upon me until the transfer of the ecclesiastical property—a ticklish business enough—had been legally effected. I reached Remagen on the Rhine towards the end of November, 1877. The friends residing there were relatives, and they offered me hospitality as long as I wished to stay, with a kindness that never failed me through many a dark and anxious day. It is important to note here, that as yet I was only convinced that I could no longer act as an Anglican clergyman, because I could not bring myself to surrender my convictions to an Anglican Bishop professing fallibility. Beyond this point I did not see my way at all.

It was fortunate for me, at the crisis I am describing, that I had plenty of time for reflection. In fact I had

little else to do, except to consider my future prospects in this world, and in the next. Shortly after my arrival in Germany, before the English Consul at Dusseldorf, I signed away my whole prospects in England, and when those documents went back to the lawyers at home, I was penniless—cut off completely from my first start in life. Then, having some time to wait, I naturally looked about for any honest way of employing my time, were it only as a relief to my temporal and spiritual anxieties.

The little community in the house above the Rhine was presided over by a retired Colonel of the army, and the youngest member of his family was a boy of some seven years of age. I mention this otherwise insignificant member of the household because, curiously enough, the observation of that child and of his manner of subsisting, had not a little to do with my awakening to the interior spirit of Catholicity. What I had of my own at this time was mere mental reasoning—"learned lumber in the head"—mixed up with controversial objections and native prejudices. Out of all that had troubled my peace in England, I now seemed completely to have passed, when I found myself in a home in Germany, where concord and charity reigned supreme.

Nevertheless my whole mind was unceasingly engrossed with but one topic—the question of obedience and authority in matters of Faith. Had it not occasioned the surrender of all my hopes in England? Must not its elucidation determine my whole future conduct? It seemed to me that only along the line of obedience to an external legitimate authority could

any human creature find guidance—success in life—and happiness hereafter. Hitherto my cogitations had been, for the most part, introspective. I was quite persuaded that on my part obedience was of prime necessity, but I began to see that there could be no such thing in actual practice unless there was an external authority to obey: whilst, at the same time, no mere man could claim to lay down a supernatural rule of faith which would be binding on my conscience, or remove the responsibility of private opinion. On the other hand, if God, as a pure Spirit, was my immediate Superior in these matters, how could I know for certain amidst the multitude of opinions around me, what exactly was His wish in each detail of daily life? How, in other words, was the Word of God to be enunciated to me? If to the first Christians it came through the sound of a human voice, were they accorded a privilege which was withheld from succeeding generations of Christians? Obedience was a relative word: its correlative was an authority to command. Ever since I could remember I had been a son in a family, but that implied parents: during my whole sonship I had been taught to obey, but that was only because I had superiors to give orders! If then actual obedience was a duty in the sphere of supernatural faith, authority to command was no less a necessary postulate in the same sphere. This led me to turn my mind from self-analysis to observe the exterior conditions of life immediately about me. What I looked for must be sought without.

In my previous history there was a circumstance which it is no harm to reveal, now that those concerned

no longer suffer here. The Protestant religion has one radical defect not always sufficiently insisted on, According to the best principles of Sociology, the individual man is destined to find perfection as the member of a family, and the family is the unit of the State. In other words, man is a social animal. But a family to be essentially one, and not a mere group of individuals, loosely connected together, must be united and subordinated in the bond of Charity and Obedience. St. Paul describes this intimate Unity, when he says :—"As in one body we have many members, but all the members have not the same office : so we being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another."

Protestantism occupies itself with the individual primarily, Catholicism with the family.

The Catholic faith puts before us, for our imitation, not exactly Jesus Christ as an isolated Person in Heaven or on earth, but Jesus subsisting in a family, and subordinated on earth to authority in His Mother Mary, and St. Joseph, His Foster-Father. Neither in time nor in eternity do we ever find our Divine Example existing outside a family of some sort. He was always the Son in the Blessed Trinity in heaven : always on earth the Son of Mary and "of Man" : When, after St. Joseph's death, He left His Mother's home at Nazareth to work in the world, He gathered around Him a family of disciples, wherein He might exhibit those virtues of self-negation, humility, and charity that can alone be practised in a family.

Protestantism, I repeat, is sadly defective here. It tends to selfish individualism by exiling Mary and St.

Joseph from its devotions—by doing so it obscures the sacred mission of the family in God's scheme of nature and of grace. This had been my own experience of Protestantism, as it is that of many others. Under that truncated system from my childhood upwards, I had never yet had experience of what a family could be, nor of the teaching it was intended to symbolize. The family is formed by a Sacrament to foreshadow a great mystery. "The husband," says St. Paul, "is the head of the wife, as Christ is the head of the Church." Husbands must love their wives, as Christ also loved his Church ; whilst children must obey their parents in the Lord. So far as my experience had gone these fundamental principles, so necessary to the education of a child within its early home, are realisable in Protestantism rather by chance than by design : hence the easy tolerance of divorce, and of social legislation injurious to the ideal of family union. In a system which aims at individualism in judgment and in practice, one can hardly expect the same results as in a Religion where the family is the central object of attention and piety. The home in which my childhood was spent knew nothing of that supernatural purpose : on the contrary, a bitter strife had separated its essential elements. In such an atmosphere faith, hope, and charity dwindle, and the special purpose of the family bond is frustrated, so far as it may train the child for an after life in the family of Christ, of which the earthly home should be the outward symbol.

I had thus grown up, not knowing what a means of grace and teaching the family was

meant to be. Happily the household by the Rhine was altogether different from what I had hitherto been accustomed to. By its associations its principles were rather Catholic than Protestant. The contrast was immediately apparent : and as I turned from reflection upon my own thoughts to look upon the world around me, I was powerfully attracted by the difference which a well ordered home exhibited : and the features which interested me most, were—obedience, as exemplified in the child ; authority in the parents—self-forgetfulness, humility, and charity in all. With a growing appreciation of their interior meaning, the Words, which came oftenest to my remembrance thenceforth, were these : “Except you become as a little child, you cannot enter Heaven.” The child, I found, practises obedience without regard to advantages and disadvantages, or to its own opinion and desires. The thing commanded was done solely to carry out the will of an unquestioned superior, because the parent had an infallible authority to command, and the subject a corresponding obligation to obey.

Where I then was, I found myself beyond the reach of controversial books, and with ample leisure to pursue an experimental method of my own devising—contemplating nature’s teaching, and reaching to the invisible by the things I could observe. In a few months I had discovered, with a certainty never since shaken in actual verification, the bed-rock of supernatural Faith : that there must exist somewhere, if Christianity be true, an infallible authority on Earth. And if that authority is true, all it teaches must be true too. If the Voice that speaks contains the words

of eternal life, however hard the sayings may be, to whom else shall we go? It was upon the Catholic Church, as the Divine Witness and Teacher upon Earth, that Cardinal Manning rested the impregnable certainty of Catholic Faith, and this certitude of mind made possible for him those great projects of active usefulness which he was afterwards able to originate and carry through. His method, however, of attaining it kept him longer on the road than that which I had travelled by. I introduce his revered name here, because years before, one of his published sermons—that on Sin—had influenced me beyond anything else I ever read.

If his Holiness, Pope Leo XIII., whose accession to the Chair of St Peter was at that very time being celebrated with such devotion throughout the Rhenish Provinces, was the Divinely appointed superior of the Christian Church, supernatural obedience to him must rise above national prejudices and human criticism. Under the successor of St. Peter, once upon a time, all Christendom had been one, but it was easy to see where conflict between Divine authority and human desires might come in. It was easy to account for the defection of a Luther and a Henry VIII. Nay, it was easy even to account for the defection of an Archangel in Heaven! For had not I myself, so far, only obeyed an external authority in matters of faith where the command recommended itself to my own reason? I had only believed as an Anglican, what I liked and what I understood. All other Anglicans, that I ever met, did the same. We had no real living authority to obey, however much we might desire it,

yet the obedience of Jesus Christ rested on the fact that there was a living authority to command Him. He carried out *what* was ordered, however disagreeable, because He recognized *who* gave the order in the person of His superior. All His life He was obedient, even to the death, at last, upon the Cross. But, as I have said, a real living obedience postulates a real, living authority.

When, however, I had recognized the need of that authority, I did not anticipate any further discoveries than those regarding obedience itself. To my surprise, I began to see things I had never noticed before, as my mind opened to new realities. The first, perhaps, was what Venerable Bede calls the "*Castitas puerilis innocentiae*;" a pure simplicity of mind, which is the birthright of holy childhood, whether natural or supernatural. Then the long years spent by Jesus at Nazareth began to be understood. Our Lord was of great age and wisdom before His coming on earth, but out of all possible states of life He chose to be born as a child into the family of St. Joseph, His Foster-father, and Mary, His Mother. Angels were bringing directions to St. Joseph from heaven, but Jesus on earth increased in wisdom and grace by being subject in all things to His Parents, the divinely authorized representatives of God, His Father.

Jesus came to obey a real living authority, that of God, expressed through human representatives thereby indicating that as the world was lost by disobedience, so must obedience, after the manner of Jesus of Nazareth, be the way back to Paradise. Substitute the Catholic Church for Mary, and our

Holy Father for St. Joseph, God's vicar to Jesus in Nazareth, and we have in the obedience of the faithful, a realization of the way in which Jesus lived His life on earth. To all of us He says: "Except ye become as little children, ye cannot enter Heaven." That is: Except ye practise the obedience of a child. But this postulates a real living authority,

Hence it soon became a certainty for me that somewhere on earth such a Divine authority as St. Joseph was to Jesus, must still exist for all who would follow Jesus in the practice of obedience. In short, the only practical question remaining to solve was—Where was that Divine authority? I had not far to seek, when once I was convinced that exist it must, because only one Christian Church claims to have had it from the first, and only one proves that it has it, by exhibiting such a unity of obedience, as only a Divine authority could create amongst a fallen, fighting mass of human beings.

Another thing that came to me in those days was the consciousness that thirty years of our Lord's life on earth, that is, practically the whole of it, had been hitherto absolutely hidden from me and meaningless, whereas now each day and hour of it shone out of the darkness of my ignorance, like the splendour of the Northern lights, with a meaning of priceless, practical value. But it would take too long to tell of all the holy evangelical truths which I caught a glimpse of then, and which I found in their perfection only after I had passed into the Catholic Church, as into a new heaven and a new earth.

A few words more and I have finished the thankless

task of speaking of a dead self. It is by contrast that we can judge most clearly, wherever a contrast is possible. Those who have never had experience of a thing may not know what it is to have it ; or if they have it, what it is to be without it ; because they have never been able to contrast the two cases.

But in what position is the soul who has had first Anglican, and afterwards Catholic, consecration ? He knows both by experience. He has tried both. He has stood at the Anglican Communion Table trying to consecrate the Blessed Body and Blood of our Lord, and to offer the same sacrifice as that of Calvary, and he may have also tried to absolve penitents from their sins—perhaps for a long period of years. Again with the same interior consciousness he stands at the Catholic Altar, offers the Divine Victim, absolves in the Confessional. Does he not know the difference ? If he had possessed the same gift all along would he not know it well ? On the contrary he realizes a contrast. He knows that now he has certain powers, while the former ordination conferred nothing upon him which was not of the *natural* order or the *natural* consequence of a dedication to pious work. If this is so, have we not here a testimony which is of some value, especially as it grows in strength daily with the increase in the number of such witnesses ? In a dangerous sickness we call in the most experienced medical aid and apply the most efficacious remedies. Thousands are passing our churches to-day as thousands passed Jesus of Nazareth knowing nothing of Him. Perhaps had these people lived in Jerusalem they would have done the same thing. Yet there are

many who are longing for a Healer, if they only knew where to find Him. Alas! how unknown, how slighted, how misused, is the virtue of healing left by our Lord in His Church! What can we do to make known this abyss of merciful help? Have we no brother whom we could bring to this fountain of grace, saying like St. Andrew with the confidence that springs out of personal experience:—"We have found the Messiah which is interpreted the Christ"?

Two years later I entered a religious order—a home more transcendently beautiful than that above the Rhine—founded by one who had been at one time, too, a soldier. How well I knew my way about from the first, for it was in the vineyards along the Ahr-Thal, and amongst the lilies in the woods above the Rhine, that the call of Christ first came to me to spend my life for ever, practising obedience, in the company of Jesus.

J. D.

“THE MASS IS THE GOSPEL”



THERE is, perhaps, nothing more helpful, either in the intellectual or in the spiritual life, than the study of the lives of those who have gone before us, walking in those same ways ; and many a movement of grace, many a turning from sin, many a conversion to the Faith, may be traced to such a beginning.

It is this conviction, and this only, which induces the writer to lay bare a page from the book of the past, and recall for others what has always seemed to herself a singularly clear example of God's dealings with souls.

* * * * *

My mother's youth was passed in the days, and amidst surroundings, in which the very name of "Roman Catholic" was synonymous with dark plottings and semi-heathenish idolatry. It was the time when Wesley and his first followers had but lately preached a new and quickened exposition of "the Gospel ;" when souls which hungered for more living bread than the "dry bones" of the Church of England, were meeting together in humble rooms and chapels to read and pray, and seek for light, not, as their founder had oftentimes insisted, in defiance of the Establishment, but supplementary to its infrequent and cold-hearted ministrations.

She became "converted," or "convinced of sin," at the age of fifteen, and for two years afterwards read nothing but her Bible, which she kept hidden between two mattresses of her bed, and underwent the usual small persecutions from the more worldly portion of her family, on her refusal to go to balls or parties, or join in the "worldly pursuits" of the time. I may mention that she has often pointed out to me since the narrow lane running down from the vicinity of her home, to where a tiny, thatch-roofed chapel sheltered the first Methodists of the place, in their prayers and preachings, led by one of her father's labourers; to which nightly meetings she would steal down in secret, unknown to any of her family.

One of these early Methodists, the wife of another labourer on her father's estate, appears to have been quite a spiritual adviser and director to the young, enthusiastic, sensitive girl; and many a tale I have heard of this good woman—Mrs. Ozanne her name was—reading with, advising and consoling the young convert. When they had puzzled over obscure texts and still obscurer commentaries together to satiety, and John Wesley's sermons and other spiritual food had been duly assimilated, the young lady brought to her friend another book, the *Vie Devote* of St. Francis de Sales! How they ventured on its perusal I know not, but much to their astonishment they found "that there was little in it of the Virgin and saints, and much of the pure love of God;" and it became one of their most favoured spiritual guides—that little brown book in its quaint old French—(Mrs. Ozanne's native language, be it remembered, as they were in

the French-speaking Channel Isles),—with marginal pen-marks here and there of approval or dislike, which lies before me now.

It was probably the perusal of the *Vie Devote* which led my mother to ask her humble friend one day, "whether she thought it possible that any Roman Catholic could be saved?" The answer, charitable but hesitating, was to the effect that perhaps *le bon Dieu* might see fit to save some poor souls among the laity, who were in ignorance of Gospel truth, "but, I think, chère demoiselle, that no priest could ever be saved, for they lead the people astray by lying words, and are in wilful error."

So, when some time later, she went to stay with friends in the quaint, old walled Breton city, which has since become quite a second home to many English families, but then was in all its pristine remoteness from modern ways, she had not been there long before, possessing that singular charm of manner and personal magnetism which some natures unconsciously hold, she found herself surrounded by groups of Breton children, at play along the deep, grass-covered "fosses" which mark the old town ramparts; and she began to talk to them, and to tell them, in her own bright, convincing way, about "Bible" stories, and to read to them from her little Testament—that panacea for all human perplexities to the devout Protestant—till she had quite a little following of disciples, only to hear, alas, all the well-known diatribes against priests, confession, and the rest. I, hearing these stories as a child, was familiar with many a little episode, as of how, passing along the market-place of old Dinan, a

woman plucked at her gown one day, with a whispered "Hist! Mademoiselle! I want to speak to you! but see, make as though you were buying something of me, for *they* are on the watch!" (*they*, meaning to one's heated imagination, who knows what ferocious Jesuit or insidious emissary of the Inquisition). "I want to speak to you in my home, near here; follow me, but *do not let any see that you do so!*" And she led the way through narrow streets and up dirty stairs, till they gained the shelter of her room, where she produced, as hidden treasure, a worn and tattered copy of the New Testament, to be "explained" by the young Protestant lady. It all seemed very good and beautiful in those days; and zeal waxed so strong that one day afterwards, as she strayed into the old Church of St. Malo, and sat there listening to its priest as he catechised his children, some teaching, I know not what, roused her ire, and she sprang up in her seat, and cried out aloud: "It is not true! It is a lie! A lie!" . . . That evening her friends received a notification from the town authorities that their guest must leave the town within twenty-four hours. So ended that episode.

Well, after this there came a long, deep, passionate friendship with one whose gifts of soul and body were well calculated to rouse devotion in a young and enthusiastic nature—and for many years she said, as did Ruth of old: "Where thou goest, I will go." I have told that story elsewhere*—how the object of that devoted friendship went to live in far Venice, and there, seeking rest for a broken body and heartsick

* In the *Irish Monthly*, under the title of "Through Night to Light."
1894.

soul, found Faith, and entered the One Fold. . . . And from that hour my mother cast her off, never wrote, or spoke to, or saw her, till the day of her death. Another friend went the same way—it was in the days of the Oxford Movement—and she, too, was dead to her from that day. To be a Catholic was, in her eyes, to embrace idolatry—to forsake Christ—to fall unutterably low in eternal condemnation. “I would rather see you dead in your coffin than a Catholic; Oh! far, far, rather,” she would say to me; and again: “No one shall cross my threshold who has ever entered the Confessional.” Once, even, when asked by a friend to call on a Catholic lady who had expressed a wish to make her acquaintance, she refused, saying she would not know a Catholic. Yet it was no perverse hatred, but, in very truth, a feeling of passionate loyalty to our Lord which made her act thus. “They dishonour my Lord,” she would say of them; and thus believing, would not suffer them in her presence.

I do not think that any “born” Catholic can quite realise this feeling of hers, or what she suffered when the blow came that I, her only child and the centre of her most passionate devotion, wished to become a Catholic. For three months we lived side by side together, never speaking, save for the common necessities of everyday life; while, at her request, clergymen of various persuasions essayed to convince me of my error. I cannot tell what the workings of her mind may have been, but I know of the agony when, after long waiting, she “let me go”; even writing a pathetic and generous “permission” to the priest who received me, I being under age.

At the somewhat hurried preparation for my First Communion, someone, I have no recollection who, told me of that sweet "pious belief" that the prayer prayed at that moment is ever answered. Need I say that mine was for her conversion? though with absolutely no expectation, no slightest hope of its fulfilment. We never spoke of religion at that time, nor did she attempt to imitate the kindly impulse of one of our Protestant friends, a very "Broad Church" lady, who offered to come to Mass with me on the first Sunday of my return home as a Catholic, "that I might feel less lonely than going alone." She little knew how full was "the joy of His Presence."

As I have said, I felt no possibility of the great gulf between us being bridged over by any change of conviction on her part, and though, as I knew, she set to work to understand what *were* the teachings of that Church which the one she loved best had entered, it only seemed part of her usual large-minded interest in everyone's thought, and in all and every form of belief, while her own remained rather of the emotional and Methodistical type than that of the Church of England. In fact she never could see the necessity for any kind of "Church" or spiritual teacher and visible authority.

After some time we went to Italy, and spent part of a year in Florence and Rome, where she went to Mass almost daily, but without any apparent wavering in allegiance to her old forms of belief, and as it is the constant practice of Ritualists and High Church people to frequent our churches when out of England, this was hardly noticeable. So we turned homewards,

staying for a while in London on our way ; and as we passed our last days there I began to feel that I had hoped, all unconsciously, some result from our sojourn in a Catholic country, and that *the thing had failed*. We were lingering in the shady garden of a certain convent, where a Roman prelate had just given Benediction, and as we turned to leave, after chatting to him awhile, I said, half-laughing, half-reproachfully, " Ah, Monsignor, we are going away to-morrow, and you have not made my mother a Catholic ! " He looked across at her in his own peculiarly pleasant and winning manner, and smilingly replied : " Never mind, Mrs. L—C—, it's not too late ; come to my eight o'clock Mass to-morrow in my private chapel, and I'll receive you into the Church ! "

We went away, laughing a little ; and that night, just as we were retiring to rest, she said to me, " If I should go out early to-morrow, *don't take any notice*." The next morning when I rose I found her absent, and . . . I did not dare to *think* . . . until presently she returned, and told me quietly, in some half-dozen words, that she had just been received into the Church.

So much for the outward events ; but of the inner workings of grace, who but the soul itself and God can trace them ? It appeared that our year's sojourn in a Catholic land had, indeed, wrought the miracle for which I asked. For she had learned one lesson—the glory and beauty of the Mass—its plenitude of grace, its wondrous adaptability to every need of every soul—its response to each human necessity. From the gorgeous and majestic altars of a Florentine Duomo,

or a St. Peter's in Rome, down to the most insignificant country chapel far out of the beaten track ; from the Mass said by a Pontiff or an Archbishop down to that said by the humblest of country curates, she had knelt at them all, and had known them to be *one*. Doctor of Divinity or eminent Theologian, kneeling side by side with the unlettered peasant telling his beads, had followed Mass together, each worshipping with equal comprehension, and with equal acceptance before the Throne. The same words ringing through St. Peter's, caught up through the old world to the new, and from the poles to the equator . . . You know it all, you *born Catholics*, but have you realised its beauty ?

There is a little book called *Septem ; or seven ways of hearing Mass*, which teaches how to join in the Holy Sacrifice as "A Mass of Purification," "A Mass of Thanksgiving," and so on ; and this book was a sort of revelation to her, and became her constant companion. She kept a little pile of copies always by her, to give her friends as an example of the all-embracing comprehensiveness of the Mass, and the perfection of its response to every need ; while in her own well-worn copy there are written two lines, often quoted by her, from Jean Ingelow's well known poems,

" Is there never a chink in the world above
Where they listen for words from below ? "

and she has added beneath,

" Yes, *here !* "

Do they not, indeed, suggest to us that vision, quoted by St. John Chrysostom, of angels adoring,

and ascending or descending between heaven and each earthly altar ?

I cannot help recalling with a smile one odd little episode of our sojourn in Florence. My mother, of course, was known to be a Protestant as I a Catholic ; so, one of the Anglo-Florentines, talking with her one day, said : "My dear Mrs. L—C—, we have remarked that you never come to the English Church on Sundays. Is it so ?" " Yes." " Oh, my dear, really, that is such a mistake ; it is such a good introduction into society ! " The speaker little knew her whom she was addressing, nor her large-minded contempt for all phases and forms of " worldliness."

So she knelt morning after morning in the great majestic stillness of fair Florence's Duomo, and lingered many a time within its adjoining " Baptistry," which she always called her favourite part of Florence ; and in truth it is pregnant with historic associations and pious memories. For in Florence, alone perhaps, of modern cities, there is one font only for all her children. The quaint, black and white octagon building which stands beside the cathedral is but an empty shrine, holding the Font ; and here every new-born Florentine for centuries, from prince to peasant, has been brought to the waters of Baptism. You can rarely sit there for any time without some little group of women, bearing a tiny white burden, making their appearance ; and a priest is always within call. Guelphs and Ghibellines ; the proud Medici and their humble dependants ; Cimabue, the father of modern painting, and Giotto, his famous disciple ; Dante Alighieri and his Beatrice ; Jerome Savonarola, and many other illustrious names,

all took them beneath this fair marble cupola, the "mio bel San Giovanni" of Dante's poem.

Perhaps my readers will hardly guess what, in all Rome, interested and touched her most. As all who have "done their Rome" ever so superficially, know well, there is outside its gates a magnificent basilica, lined with the most precious marbles, surrounded by exquisite cloisters, beneath whose High Altar is enshrined the body of the Apostle of the Gentiles. Now, there being a latent idea in the minds of many Protestants that St. Paul is, so to speak, their own Apostle, with a kind of suspicion that he is somewhat neglected by Catholics in favour of St. Peter, this magnificent shrine comes to them in some sort as a surprise. And, when we had traversed all that shining marble pavement, so glorious in its semi-translucent colouring that it seems like a very pavement of more than mortal temple; when we stood beside the stately baldachino which shrouds the earthly remains of that humble Roman citizen, small and low of stature, weak-eyed and insignificant, before whom the persecutors of Stephen once cast their raiment—she learned, with a great surprise, and was touched even to tears in hearing that at his feet lay his beloved disciple, Timothy. I remember how she stood looking down into the crypt, and repeating, "Timothy, mine own son in the faith." She seemed to catch a glimpse of how exquisitely tender and full of meaning is the Church—what a beautiful thought it was, to lay that "son" of his *at his feet* for ever.



We expected, on returning home, a storm of reproaches from relations and friends, on the "perversion" of one whose intellectual and physical gifts had made her a centre of social life ; but the line our friends took was far more perplexing ; they persistently refused to believe in her change. She had outwardly conformed, to please her child, they said, nothing more. "Ah, my dear," they would say to her, "you don't mean to tell us that *you* go to confession ! " No, no ! we know better than that ! Your priests are very clever, they know better than to force a clever woman like you to do anything you don't like ! Believe ? Oh, of course ! of course ! They let you believe just as much or as little as you like. Anything to *get you in !*" And from this provoking standpoint they could not be moved ; though some of the more timorous spirits *were* persuaded that she kept a perpetual priest hidden under the sofa, ready to pop out and "baptise" an unwary visitor.

And now, this paper is already too long. I will close it with the words of the last poem she ever penned, which was printed for private circulation, and signed with her initials (L. L. C.).

"LA MESSA É L'EVANGELIO."

An English lady of strong Protestant prejudices was present from curiosity at a Mass in Rome ; and at the time of the Elevation, when all around her prostrated themselves in worship, she maintained her attitude as a spectator, to the distress of a devout woman near her, who, after two or three ineffectual

attempts to induce her to kneel, urged *sotto voce* this simple appeal to her Christianity, "*La Messa é l'Evangelio.*"

Yes ! it is the pictured Gospel
In that worship we behold :
Yes ! it is the sweetest story
Human tongue hath ever told.
Wherefore then refuse to own it,
Why resists the stubborn knee,
When the "Agnus Dei" telleth
Of such boundless love to thee ?

Yes ! it is the pictured Gospel,
Stranger ! follow all the tale,
From the "Gloria in Excelsis"
To the rending of the Veil.
Lady ! kneel ; perchance thou knowest
What the burden is of sin,
What it is to loathe and shrink from
All the seven-fold guilt within :
Wherefore then refuse to own it,
Why resists the stubborn knee,
When the "Agnus Dei" telleth
Of such boundless love to thee ?

Lady ! kneel ; see how the worship
Pictures to the wondering gaze
All the mystery of that Passion
Angels saw with such amaze.
Now we whisper "non sum dignus ;"
Now within our hearts we pray,
"Enter in, O, sweet Lord Jesus,
Never more to pass away."
Wherefore then refuse to own it,
Why resists the stubborn knee,
When the "Agnus Dei" telleth
Of such boundless love to thee ?

T. L: L: T:

TO THE CHURCH

THROUGH THE

SALVATION ARMY.



IT was in May, 1884, that I knelt at the penitent form of the Salvation Army in Glasgow, and gave myself wholly up to the service of whatever God there might be, on condition that He should give me the power to do right.

I will here give shortly my spiritual history up to that point. A child of great natural devotion and quick logical powers, the desultory scraps of religion I picked up at home and in various evangelistic meetings had disgusted me at fifteen with what I called Christianity. Clever sceptical teachers told me that all religions were equally true, and all equally false. At eighteen, I had, however, decided that I "believed more than I disbelieved" in Christianity, and had found an accommodating Episcopal clergyman who was willing to baptize and present me for confirmation, without insisting on my belief in anything more than "the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man."

He had said, "That is all I suppose you to be assenting to when you answer, 'I do' to my question,

'Do you believe all the articles of the Christian Faith as contained in the Apostles' Creed?' "

And I thought he ought to know his own duties, and accepted what he offered, and strove with his help to explain away all those sentences in the prayer-book which spoke of sin, and an atonement, and the Blood. But it was fatiguing.

"I really can't stick here," I said to my friends. "I must go on into the Catholic Church or go back into nothingism."

Just here, the Salvation Army presented itself. I was too thoroughly grounded in Newman's works—read for their marvellous rhetoric and logic—for Anglican fallacies or Unitarian sentimentalities to attract me. But the Army boldly threw aside all that the sects travestied, and took its ground on Quakerism, which Dr. Moehler says is the only thoroughly logical form of Protestantism, answering, piece for piece, to the well-knit body of dogma presented by the Church. Moreover, it offered the fullest scope for sacrifice. Its people dared: they suffered. But, beyond all else, it was as I knelt among them, cynical little American tourist that I was, and promised God the full service of my whole life, that I came to see in one lightning flash of intuition, that all I could know or conceive of the character of God embodied itself in the character and Person of Jesus of Nazareth. It was no process of reasoning. I just saw Jesus with the eyes of my soul, and I saw Him as the Working Man of Nazareth Who had come down to earth from heaven, Who had been tired, and cold, and hard-worked, and

Who now called me to follow Him to the poorest and the lowest. When one has fogged and bewildered one's intellect, while yet one's need is desperate and one's will set, at last, to do the will of God, I think He speaks directly to the soul. And the result of my experience in a life turned altogether from the world, seems to show it was from Him.

I had no thought then of joining the Salvation Army. I felt I had a clue which might, in time, make me useful to souls in an Episcopal Sisterhood, for I had always said that, if ever I came to believe in Christianity, Christ should have everything.

An analysis of the mental processes which led me soon afterwards into the Salvation Army as an officer, would be too personal to be of use to others. One strong motive was a desire to encourage my sister who was suddenly converted through its means from a life of the most intense worldliness, and who is a prominent officer in its ranks to-day. The personal "magnetism" some people claim for the Booths never existed for me. The beautiful lives of obscure officers whose names are never known to "The Family," who have no recognition to hope for, and no prizes to play for in Army politics, won me. Such lives, woven of prayer, hold the Army together.

Just before I entered the Training Home at Clapton, in October, 1884, an overpowering desire seized me to go away for a few days, alone with God, and consider in His sole presence the step which was to give me to poverty and exile, to the perpetual companionship of the poor, and the sole jurisdiction of

strangers. But my sister cried, and said she could not enter without me, and that she risked her soul each day she stayed "in the world," and the moment of grace passed.

My seven months as a "cadet" have always looked like a bad dream. My one idea was to live through them, and get at my life-work. Never was more pliable novice than I. In those days we suffered real hardship. That was, perhaps, the best feature of our training. I was always cold, always exhausted and over-strained, generally hungry, and I blindly but steadily offered all up to our Lord for the sins of what we called "great, dark London." I gained immensely in indifference to externals, in habits of unquestioning obedience, and outward humility. So far as I can learn, the life of a poor Clare, or a Trappistine, is comfortable compared to that of a "cadet" in my day. Spiritually, I learned nothing. But a soul which has surrendered all, however mistakenly, gains some grace, and I clung to God. Outside the Homes, Army life can be healthy enough, mentally and spiritually. It is as the individual makes it.

After finishing my training, I spent three months in my own home, applying Salvation Army tactics to the habits of American villagers, then returned to London as member of the Training Staff, as well as editor of the international monthly, *All the World*. For several years I worked steadily on the *War Cry*, also visiting nearly every Continental country as preacher and journalist, spending a great deal of time in the slums, helping in Rescue and Social work

at every possible leisure moment, picking up stray children who needed caring for, rushing off into the provinces when wanted for lectures on Darkest England or at the General's great meetings, and getting from my own work, and through the loving intimacy accorded me by the Booth family, as rounded a knowledge of the Salvation Army as it is possible for a woman to have. The General has even been generous enough to say that I gave him the germ of his great social scheme. Lives so crowded as mine was, leave little scope for theological questionings, and the readiness with which much contact with human nature and facile familiarity with my Bible enabled me to answer queries and objections, kept my ignorance from what George Eliot calls "a painful sense of limpness."

During the years up to 1890, I never remember a shadow of doubt that I was doing God's will. Sorrows were many, difficulties thick. I agonized, often, over my lapses from Salvation Army standards of perfection. I toiled to conquer my hot temper, I strove to crush the "worldliness of the intellect" which wearied of Wesley, and Fletcher, and Finney, and Mrs. Booth, and longed even for a mathematical work to let my mind out on. But I believed all wrong was in myself.

Then came a great grief—and one for which my mode of religion had no balm, since its root was another's unrepented sin.

"My dear," said Mrs. Josephine Butler to me once, "much as I love the Army, if I read Christ's Gospel aright, it has one lack. You have no comfort for

the people who fail. I grant your successes are marvellous. But failure also has a place in God's plan."

At first I would not admit the fact of sin in my comrade. Black should be white, wrong right! When conscience reasserted itself and I admitted his condemnation, by praying for his pardon, a new difficulty met me. I must suffer, always, for his sin. The more I suffered, the heavier his crime. Yet the more I mourned his sin, the more I suffered, and so his guilt was increased. Clearly, that way lay madness! A poem of Adelaide Proctor gave me a ray of light—

"Then thou mayest take thy loneliest fears,
The bitterest drops of all thy tears,
The dreariest hours of all thy years.

And by thy anguish there outspread
May pray that God's great love would shed
Blessings on one beloved head."

Father Faber's *Growth in Holiness* and *Spiritual Conferences* came into my hands at this time, and I have no words for the help they were to me. I told my superior officer who, to a faithful Salvationist, takes the place of a director, that they helped me more than my Bible, and he solemnly warned me against drawing either comfort or help from "a tainted source."

Next came a Catholic sermon—the second one I had ever heard—preached in the Church of the Holy Name, Manchester, in which city I was lecturing and collecting for the Darkest England Fund. In it, the three-fold power of prayer was clearly brought

out, and the value of acts and sufferings, as well as of mere words offered up to God. Oh, the light and the healing that came through that sermon! Pain, anguish, even my sickening horror at thought of the hidden, unrepented (for unacknowledged) sin, carried in my friend's breast as he stood and spoke to huge audiences of God and goodness, could be offered up to God for his soul! That sermon preserved my soul-sanity and restored my health.

After that I wanted more Catholic books, and discovered St. Joseph's Library, Mayfair. I cared not at all for theology, but revelled in lives of saints and founders of religious orders, and I strove to weave all I learned into my own life and work, and to popularize them into *War Cry* sketches.

"Get us another saint for next week, won't you?" the editor used to say, coming into my office, "but not *too* Popish a one."

My own feeling was simply that I was working into my writing "the best in Catholicism." Mdlle. Marie Belloc came to "interview" me as a woman editor, somewhere about this time, and thrust an unwitting pin into me, by speaking of the marvellous stability of Catholic foundations and their irrepressible vitality. But it only pricked a day or two.

My fellow-editor did me one very good turn.

"I've got a wonderful little book," he said to me one day. "Remarkable. It's called *Catholic Belief*, by a Father Bruno."

"Lend it to me," I pleaded.

"I daren't," he said. "But it's only sixpence, and you can get it in the Row."

I did before I slept. I grew fond of *Catholic Belief*. Its denunciations of Justification by Faith only furnished me many a text against what Salvationists abhor, as "Only-Believe-ism." But it didn't stir my conscience, and a "Hail Mary" which I essayed to say once nearly choked me. I never could even remember the "Hail Mary" till I really wanted to *pray* it!

A *Life of St. Teresa*, with a preface by Cardinal Manning, made a great impression on me. I felt, as does my old auxiliary, Dr. Whyte of Edinburgh, that she knew how to draw near to God. May she do for Him all she has done for me! One morning I opened the book before breakfast, and laid it down with a strange terror. Somehow, from somewhere, through the cold London daylight in that ordinary little room, Teresa d'Ahumada *spoke*, and told me she should never let me go till I, too, was "a child of the Church."

Confession and Communion, as I knew they were linked and used in High Church parishes, seemed to me to supply a need of human nature only partially met by Army penitent-forms and "personals," as manifestation of conscience to a superior is called. Confession would enable our officers to know the state of their soldiers' consciences, and, if insisted on as a duty incumbent on all, often prevent losses of which we knew nothing till they had occurred. "Some substitute for the communion service would," I argued, "meet the need some of us feel of a regular external act of *worship*. We can't go out to the penitent-form, unless we have done wrong. But

we often long to fling ourselves down before God in special humility, when we are not conscious of sin."

For myself, I always wanted to go to the penitent-form when I was living closest to God, and my longing for such confession of sin was a great trial to my Army friends.

"I'm best when I'm sorry!" I used to say. "It's almost worth while to be a poor sinner to come to God in a sorry heap and be forgiven."

Indeed, truly devout Salvationists could hardly live save for the meetings in which they may voice their "experiences" and all their imperfections. No doubt the possession of an honest "abiding sorrow for sin," on the part of people who are taught, as I was, that admission of a sense of sin after one has "obtained the second blessing" is dishonouring to God, accounts for the melancholy tone so often taken by those experiences among Methodists. "Getting the second blessing" with most honest English Salvationists, the General among them, means no more than striving to follow counsels of perfection with a consequent deepening of one's sorrow for sin, though the influences of American religious emotionalism have, in this country, produced a far more dangerous tendency in "holiness" teaching.

All these ideas I voiced with the utmost frankness to Mr. Bramwell Booth, his wife, and Commissioners Railton and Carleton, who were my close friends.

"But I never took you seriously," protested Mr. Booth when I reminded him of these talks after my conversion. He could hardly have shown more

clearly how Salvationists regard the most sacred dogmas as pure matters of speculation. They were never such to me.

In 1895 I was set to work, among waif and stray boys in London, and, later on in the year, given charge of the Auxiliary League of non-Salvationists who support the Army by money and influence. This involved much speaking from Protestant pulpits of all denominations, an intercourse with Protestants which only deepened my love for the Army. "We know neither Catholic nor Protestant," say its members. "We are Salvationists."

In March, 1896, at the time of Mr. Ballington Booth's quarrel with his father, which threatened the complete disruption of the Army in America, I was sent hurriedly to New York, to do what I could to uphold the principles of the Salvation Army—of internationalism, of unity in faith (?), of surrender of individualism for the sake of union in a Spirit-guided body.

But Providence willed it otherwise for me. Just at the critical moment of my mission to what I had believed to be a Spirit-guided body, I was summoned to my mother's deathbed, where I was obliged to watch for a period of five weeks, during which my mind was distracted from international schemes for averting the disruption then threatening the Army. Besides, my bewildered spirit could not help exclaiming as I watched the sufferer visibly nearing her end, "she is dying like a *Catholic* saint, not like a Salvationist." The constant acts of contrition, the perpetual ejaculatory prayers—"Mercy, my Father! My Jesus,

mercy!"—the steady disclaiming all personal merit, and the longing for strong *authorized* aid such as she regarded my own and that of my Salvationist brother-in-law were all so Catholic. And I rejoice to-day to recall that from many Salvationist deathbeds the delusion of "sanctification" seems to pass. Mrs. General Booth herself begged us to sing, beside her's, a song tabooed in Army meetings—

"The mistakes of my life have been many,
The sins of my heart have been more."

My mother was the sweetest and most instinctively Catholic soul I have ever known. She had never entered a Catholic church, nor read a Catholic book. But she spent hours of each day in prayer, and had to be held back, like St. Elizabeth, from stripping her wardrobe for the poor. She always prayed for her dear dead. She said once, hearing my sister declaim against a crucifix of mine, "I do not understand how Lily can speak so. It can only help us to see representations of our Lord on the Cross. I should like one in every room in my house."

After her death I prayed for her still, I spoke to her *in God*, not knowing how I verged on Catholic doctrine in so doing. And a week after she went away from us, a longing to "come close to our Lord," as I put it, in Holy Communion, woke in my heart, and was never soothed till He came to me one stormy morning of last March, in the Pro-Cathedral at Liverpool.

After my mother's death, I went back to New York. I was a "Brigadier," head of the 6,000 American "auxiliaries," and selected as a sort of controversialist-

in-ordinary, in a warfare waging against Salvationist repudiation of the sacraments by leading sectarian ministers of the city. I studied *Barclay's Apology*—the Salvationist authority—and my New Testament, and wondered what these ministers were contending for. The New Testament *alone* offered no ground for their own views. The New Testament interpreted by tradition, in whose light the General said we were to read it, even when one accepted his definition of tradition as “the consensus of Christian belief,” taught the doctrine of the *Catholic Church*.

I drifted, one November Sunday, into the Jesuit Church in Fifteenth-street, for Benediction, and realized, for the first time, that our Lord was present in a different way to that in which He may be spiritually present with His people anywhere. I believed, because I discerned Him. Still, I took no action. Belief like mine was still a different thing from living faith.

Next I learned that my dear friend, Hon. Mrs. Drummond, of London, had been received into the Church in August. She had been my sheet-anchor of Protestantism, and the embodiment of all that gave Salvationism an intellectual right to exist. I wrote, entreating her to give me the grounds for her action ; but the line of argument which had convinced her did not appeal to me. It was based on a reverence for Scripture authority which I had never felt. She begged me to consult Father Searle, the noted Paulist, and to read his book, *Plain Facts*. Pressed by a determination to know at least just what I *did* believe, I went to him. Father Searle refused my cry for “more

books," saying that I had "read enough," thanks to St. Joseph's Library, and that my one *crux*, "Did our Lord intend to establish a visible Church on earth?" could only be met by the illumination of grace. I was to go away and pray—to make prayer a constant undercurrent of life, and to offer up all my work as prayer for light. What Church he founded, if any, did not need considering. I had settled that years before, and re-settled it when Purcell's *Life of Cardinal Manning* brought the Gorham controversy to my memory again. (I am not aware that the said book was ever of benefit to any living soul beside myself!)

This was on December 26th, 1897. I asked my American leaders for three months' leave to think, pray, and "settle some spiritual difficulties." They refused absolutely. "Might I be excused from my next lecturing tour?" I might *not*. No word was said in reply to my complaint of spiritual difficulties. The Salvation Army is established to care for the souls of those *outside* its ranks, at what cost to the souls of those within, who are found able to extend its domain, it matters not, unless they make utter moral shipwreck. I had previously written to Mr. Bramwell Booth, telling him that Mrs. Drummond's conversion had shaken me and pleading tacitly for help. He had none to give, and he never answered my letter. By New Year's Eve I needed no help from him. I saw the Church as Christ's creation in the pages of my little red Army Testament as clearly as I saw Himself to be the Incarnate God. I had stolen that night for God and my own soul, and shut myself into my room, promising Him to

read that New Testament unbiassedly, and to act on what He might show me through it.

Next day came the real agony; I believed my conversion would literally kill my father, and my friend and leader, Emma Booth-Tucker. I had no single Catholic acquaintance on all that continent: Father Searle had left the city. The bed I slept on was Army property, the clothes I wore were Salvationist uniform, my home was my sister's Salvationist headquarters. New York police would probably not allow me to sit on a doorstep and enjoy the luxury of being a Catholic, and how would flesh and blood and woman's nerves even endure the clash round me of all that had made life for so long?

I slipped away and found Rose Hawthorne Lathrop, Nathaniel Hawthorne's convert daughter, down at her wonderful Damien-like work of caring for cancer patients in the slums, and she took me to Father Van Rensselaer, S.J.—a man who had heard that clash himself of a world falling round him. He sent me to the Archbishop—a Salvationist convert seeming to present herself to everybody as a curious anomaly—and finally I turned back to the Paulists. There is no need to tell of all the storms and tempests and excitements the next weeks held.

"I wish I were an apple woman or a crossing-sweeper with no responsibilities in the world but my own soul!" I used to wail, wondering if I had a right to my own salvation when it seemed likely to cost the spiritual wreckage of many.

Then I was called to England at three days' notice to give an account of my intentions. I *dared* not go,

unbaptized or unabsolved, and two days before I sailed I flung myself into the office of the editor of *The Catholic World*, Rev. A. P. Doyle, C.S.P. His sympathy and wise helpfulness had never failed during the weeks in which he had been instructing the most irregular and terrified of catechumens, who had always before her the fear that an enterprising journalist might be on her track. I said that day, "I've *come*, and I can only possibly stay an hour ; can you take me in now ? "

And he did.

Oh, the bliss of it ! As I jogged up town on the "Elevated," clutching still that first worn little copy of *Catholic Belief* bought in the Old-World Paternoster Row, the words of an Anglican hymn rang in my ears :—

"Forth from the dark and stormy sky,
Lord, to Thine altar's shade we fly.
Forth from the world, its hope and fear,
Saviour, we seek a refuge here,
Weary and weak, Thy grace we pray ;
Turn not, O Lord, Thy guests away !"

Of all the baptismal service the words I longed to hear were "*Ingrederet in templum Det.*"

"Is there any particular Saint whose name you would like to take ? " asked Father Doyle at the font, and I opened wide mine eyes.

"Teresa of course ! "

Her help and her friendship had been as real a thing to me as Mrs. Drummond's or Mrs. Lathrop's or his own ; and the thought she has kept uppermost in my mind through severance and loneliness and—hardest of all—apparent uselessness and idleness is "After all I, too, am a child of the Church."

S. T. S

ON THE THRESHOLD



I FEEL that I have reached the valley of decision. I am not yet a Catholic, but it is my daily prayer that I may have the strength to do the holy will of God in all things. I feel now whither this prayer is leading me, or shall I say whither it has already led me?

Do Catholics realize, can they realize, what it costs for a clergyman, more especially when a married man with a family, to become a Catholic? For years I have been thinking of this step, looking at what it means, often praying over it—and now that the necessity of it is staring me in the face, more than ever it did before, I find it as hard as ever. How one's friends come round one, and, after trying every form of reasoning, advise delay (as though I had not delayed long enough). One of their great arguments is "You are already a priest, what more do you want?" Again they bring up everything that has ever been invented against Catholics, and in particular against priests, and monks, and nuns, and Jesuits—all impure and wicked beyond the powers of the most vivid imagination! As for the folly of all this, which I meet mostly among my friends in Ireland, I have

travelled too much, and seen too much both among Ritualists and Catholics, to be much affected by it. I have learnt some reverence for holy things and holy persons, and this style of reasoning produces the opposite effect from that intended. But there is also another kind of talk, which may have been more potent to keep me in my present position so long. They ask "How will you be able to support yourself, and how will you like to dress as a mere layman?" Or as a clergyman wrote to me quite lately from England: "Your home life will be troublesome." Yes, I feel all this deeply, perhaps, too deeply. It is true if I become a Catholic, I shall lose my profession, my social standing, as well as nearly all my friends. I know not exactly how I shall live, above all how I shall support my wife and child. This is hard, it may be a very "troublesome home"—but one thought supports me here, and it is that it is better to have a "troublesome home" now than a "troublesome hell" hereafter.

I have been asked to write some account of my experiences as a Protestant, in order to trace the steps, as well as I can, by which I have been brought to my present position, which I think is aptly designated by the title heading these pages. I was born in England of Irish parents (my father was a clergyman before me), and at a very early age I was taken to Ireland and there educated. I spent six years at one of the oldest and best-known Protestant schools in Dublin, during which time I imbibed all the religious ideas and prejudices of those around me. I had a firm belief in the Bible,

and of course a very strong hatred for Popery in every shape and form. I remember I was the proud possessor of a New Testament, and this I used to read almost daily. I also attended from time to time some of the revivalistic meetings which were common, and naturally believed nearly everything I heard there.

With much error I learnt one truth very deeply, which has been a sort of guiding star to me in all my difficulties, and that was the Divinity of Christ. In due course I went to Trinity College, and there I found much to shake my faith, but it was firmly implanted in my mind, and often came back on me with new force, and helped me to steer through many trials. I felt a reaction against the theories of conversion and final perseverance, with which I had been familiarized in my early days, and I was decidedly inclined to take up with Broad church views and all sorts of novelties. Among other vagaries, I was drawn into a movement which existed in my time in Dublin University towards Esoteric Buddhism. There was a sort of club among the students of the College for the cultivation of Theosophy, some of the members of which became afterwards distinguished in their several careers. They got over from London a native Hindoo, who was a most ardent devotee to this form of religion, if it can be called such. He was not only intimately versed in all the mysteries of Esoteric Buddhism, but was capable of defending his views with very marked success. Being a most attractive man and a cultivated speaker, he was naturally made a good deal of by those who were

inclined to entertain his views. His strong point, were the Universal Brotherhood of men, and the denial of Dogmatic Religion in the stricter senses. To counteract his influence, some of the Protestant party called in an Anglican clergyman to hold a discussion with him, with a result which must have been painful indeed for those who desired to hear the cause of Christianity successfully upheld. Their champion was no match either in temper or in learning for the astute Oriental, who was most courteous and unimpassioned even when dealing the hardest blows at his opponent. I remember feeling rather sorry for this state of affairs, for through all my doubts and waverings, I felt that the cause of Christ and His Divinity was worth a better defence.

I will pass over the rest of my college career merely to mention that about this time, or rather later, I fell under a different influence. This was due to my acquaintance with a High Church clergyman (now I think in the Diocese of Liverpool) who effectually broke down many of my Anti-Catholic prejudices. He was at one time very near Rome himself, but up to the present, as far as I am aware, he has found a home in the Establishment. I happened to know of several cases of those who, like myself, have gradually become convinced of the falsity of their position, but whether they have been prevented from leaving it by the same sort of motives which have told on myself, I am unable to state, except indeed in the case of some who have been frank enough to avow it.

I left the University to go to a theological college

in England. This was well for me, as, had I remained for my whole life in Ireland, I do not believe I should ever have been even on "the threshold" which is something after all.

I was for two and a-half years at this College, and I there learnt gradually many things (and I may say also unlearnt many), which I could never have accepted, had these truths been put before me by a Catholic Priest. Coming from the members of our own Church, I believed it was all right. This was in truth the great turning point in my life. The College had a very monastic appearance, and in most externals we conformed to Catholic practices. We said all the canonical hours in the College Chapel, and used lights, incense, and vestments. These latter were the ordinary Roman ones, bought, I think, in Belgium. The Principal was a man of very advanced views, and before celebrating the Anglican Communion service, he used to say with the server, who was, of course, one of the students, a short Office in which the "Confiteor" occurred. There was, however, a party among the students who rebelled against saying their part of the "Confiteor," in which they had to confess their sins before the Blessed Virgin Mary, and certain of the saints who were specially named!

They even threatened to appeal to the authorities on the subject, when a compromise was effected, and by special privilege they were allowed to substitute, instead of the obnoxious invocations, the words, "Before the whole company of heaven." Still on the whole we accepted High Church doctrines. We

believed in the Real Presence, and used regularly to practise Confession, and many of us the Invocation of Saints. In fact we usually took our theological difficulties to the study of the Principal, to get them resolved, and much I learned from that quarter that was new to me personally.

I remember bringing before him a matter which was more important than I think I knew at the time. I had heard in Ireland of the devotion to the Sacred Heart, as practised among Catholics, and about this time I came across it again in a Ritualistic manual of prayers called the *Vade Mecum*. Being familiar with all the aspirations in the *Anima Christi* to the Blood and Water and Wounds of Christ, and so on, and being fond of the prayer, and having moreover heard the devotion to the Five Wounds of Christ recommended to the children by the Vicar of the Parish, I thought devotion to the Sacred Heart could not be unlawful. The Principal told me, when I asked the question, that I might practise it if I wished. I felt somehow drawn to this. It seemed to me to speak of Divine sympathy, and after all there is nothing we want in times of trouble (and I have had my share) as much as sympathy. Anyhow I began to practise this devotion, and have never since relinquished it. I have been asked lately by a Catholic priest who knows my state of mind, and also is very strongly of opinion that this was the most special grace of my life, whether I think myself that the possibility of my becoming a Catholic now is due to the incident I have been narrating. I should be afraid of exaggerating, or perhaps, of

saying more than I really feel on this subject. I do recognise that it was a special grace. I think it has been leading me on towards Catholicity, at least in this way. I felt to practise devotion to the Sacred Heart was a distinct breaking with my Protestant traditions, perhaps, more even than anything which I had accepted. Probably when I have been a Catholic for some years (which I hope will be the case if my life is spared), I shall understand, even better than I do now, the influence the Sacred Heart has had over my destinies.

The reader may be interested to know how I fared in another enquiry—this time from my Anglican Confessor. I asked him if I might conscientiously, as a member of the Church of England, recite the "Hail Mary." He asked me if I said it standing or kneeling. I do not know what I answered, but he distinctly stated that to say it kneeling is sinful, but if not kneeling, without harm. I do not quite understand how he arrived at this distinction. Still, from his point of view, it was not a bad device. For how can there be any real heart-devotion to Our Lady, if we refuse to kneel before her?

I was ordained Deacon in the New World, and my experiences there gave me to understand how very advanced were my brother clergy in that region. Not being in good health, I returned to Ireland for some months, and then went out to the Colonies, where I worked for the space of four years. I thought I ought to give the Church of England every chance, and that from every available standpoint. Whether I was right in so thinking I will not now discuss,

but I certainly put her to the test, and as certainly I found her wanting. I may mention a few—only a few—of the details that helped to lead me to this decision. My very first Vicar in Africa gave me a great shock. He was in the habit of hearing confessions. Now I asked him what he would do in the case of a girl who had confessed pilfering from her mistress, in case he was applied to for a character of the girl. "Oh!" he replied, "I can give no character to a thief." Thinking this somewhat curious, I took the liberty of asking the neighbouring Catholic priest, with whom I was on good terms, what he thought of the Vicar's dealings with his penitents, and how he would act in a similar case? His surprise and his reply can be well imagined. This I was wicked enough to retail to my own Superior, who only said: "But, my good fellow, you know Father —— was brought up by the Jesuits." This was true enough.

If the views of my brethren on Confession were strange, their practice as to fasting was not less surprising. My late Rector observes Lent by fasting twice a week, and by smoking only after tea. This is well enough I suppose, for an Anglican, but what I could not stand was that he carried out his theory of fasting Communion by taking (only) a cup of coffee before celebrating. I once asked him what he considered would constitute a breach of the Church's rule? His reply was, "Roast beefsteak." My conclusion came to this: If only High Church, Broad Church, Long Church, and Low Church could agree on one single point—say what the Church is—we might

begin to know where we are. I had been letting out my feelings to one of my friends, who was a decidedly High Church Irish clergyman, and, as he began to protest against me, I asked him how he managed to sign the "Irish Prayerbook." It is possible, indeed, to read a mild sort of Catholicity into the English Prayerbook, which has (as Cardinal Newman remarked) an Armenian Liturgy united to Calvinistic Articles. But its revised Irish sister is at least "frankly Puritan." My friend said he signed it in his own sense and he described himself as a Celtic Catholic. But can any of my Catholic readers inform me what this phrase may mean? For myself I confess I do not know the Brand. However I am looking forward to the time when this will be all over, and at least I shall be with those who know their own mind.

Before proceeding to relate my final experiences as an Anglican priest, I should like to acknowledge the help I have received in the part of my journey which I have already travelled over from the two men to whom under God I shall most attribute the grace of my conversion. One of these was an Irish priest living in England, and who holds, I believe, an unique position among literary Catholics. The other is my friend, Mr. Hartwell Grisell, of Brazenose College, Oxford. I remember the shock which my anti-Catholic opinions received from conversing with him. Especially his knowledge of the Uniate Greeks enlightened my mind much on the subject of the Eastern Church, which I believed till then to be universally opposed to the claims of the Roman See.

What has finally decided for me that my position as an Anglican priest is untenable is the Papal Bull on Anglican Orders. Like so many others in the same position as myself, I seemed to have staked all on this most momentous decision. We were all so certain of a victory, taking it as a foregone conclusion that if Rome only considered our claims she could not but admit them. This belief was, I know, very widespread among the more advanced Ritualistic clergy. We did not consider any other point of view except our own—that which had ever been dinned into us by our leaders, and which we were ever dinning into one another. Now that certain Catholics in France had considered the question impartially, they were loud in asserting with us the genuineness of our title to be considered Catholic priests. (This no doubt added largely to our confidence.) If once our Orders were granted, the rest would be easy. We should be formed into a Uniate Church like the Easterns. We should make certain terms with the Holy See, and should be allowed to retain the Chalice, our own Liturgy, and above all our wives.

This last point was the important one for those of us who, like myself, had entered into the married state. My dear wife was as anxious about it as I was myself, but seeing my assurance on the subject, she fully entered into it. "Wait," said I, "but a little, and all will be right. We shall be together as before, my priesthood will be settled, our doubts dispelled for ever, and our true Catholicity established beyond the cavil of men."

Of course my wife gladly acquiesced in this view, and all went happily for the time. But that Bull: what a thunderclap it proved for us, as for many! How it woke us rudely from our reveries to the realities of our situation! Our hopes all shattered, our pack of cards thrown down. Only one alternative remained for us both—Rome or Protestantism. The latter seemed impossible to me, more or less so after the first moment of the shock. At first my wife did not see it so clearly as I did, and yet she is now a Catholic, while I am still without the pale. Our infant daughter was at that time the battleground as it were. Though I have not even up to the present moment carried out my convictions in my own case, I was anxious to have the child baptized a Catholic. Even if I never had the needful courage to become a Roman Catholic, I was anxious that she should never have to change her religion, and go through all that I am still going through. From the very dawn of reason onwards I wished her to have perfect peace of mind, and unity of teaching and belief. Moreover, my wife did not then know that the child's life had been granted to the prayer of some Dominican nuns, who, when she was in danger of death soon after coming into the world, had said for her a Hail Mary every night after their devotions. She had been given up by the doctor, and I was so convinced that it was the nuns who saved her, that I promised them if ever the girl showed a wish to become a nun—I did not mean an Anglican nun—I should not oppose it.

After the Bull, then, I at once insisted on the child's

baptism, and soon after my wife was herself received into the Church, for when once she had made up her mind on the subject she did not wish to delay for a moment. She tells me now she does not regret even our position and our outlook, which is, God knows, not a bright one from a worldly point of view. Her grand faith and confidence in God has made easier for me the step which I am contemplating. There is no alternative now for me, if I am to save my soul. I must throw up the Tudor settlement, must revert to the religion of my fathers, must return to the rock from which I was hewn. Please God, I shall not be much longer on the Threshold, but soon within the Fold. Many of my friends think I am but following a Will-o'-the-wisp. But I know better. The star I am following is only the Star of Bethlehem, the Star of Mary Immaculate. Dear Irish Catholic, say one Our Father, and one Hail Mary for me.*

* It is hardly necessary to state that the writer of the article carried out the resolution expressed in it. —ED.

THE ROAD TO ROME; OR, THE STORY OF MY LIFE.*

(Dedicated to W. P., on his birthday.)



I CALL the history of my conversion the story of my life; because, although it does not properly speaking include all, or even the greater number of years that I have lived, yet, it includes the central and most critical portion of my existence, and moreover all the other events I have lived through, when compared with this one, seem to fade into insignificance. It is now two or three years since it was first suggested to me to commit the history of it to writing: but probably I might never have done so had not recent circumstances renewed the memory of it, and stirred me to put pen to paper. I say renewed the memory of it, but though, when busy with my daily task, the memory of it may have appeared to be dormant for a time, yet in reality it has been ever fresh and vivid, as though of the events of yesterday. As to the strict and scrupulous honesty

* It is only fair to state that this paper was written, and its title adopted (as was the present volume projected and announced), before the book entitled "Roads to Rome" was undertaken.

with which I shall endeavour to tell my story, I need not take any merit to myself on this score, since it is a subject on which to lie or to exaggerate would be to me almost a physical impossibility.

I was brought up in rather a religious atmosphere, that is to say, my parents and relatives both talked a good deal about religion, and, according to their lights, tried to practise it. My mother died while I was extremely young : yet the first impressions which I received from her were very valuable, and I cannot exaggerate all I owe to her influence and prayers. Nearly all my relatives were low-church to the last degree, in fact all but dissenters. My father was no lover of the Church of England, to which he nominally belonged : among other ideas, he disbelieved in infant baptism, and refused to submit any one of his eight children to what he considered an unscriptural rite. Fortunately, by our own request, we were all at various times baptised. I, though the third in point of age, was the first to demand to be thus initiated into Christianity, when I was at the age of sixteen or thereabouts. It was about the same time that I found the services of the Church of England, which I was obliged to attend, were sinking into my mind, and that by slow and sure degrees, I was gravitating towards High Church services and doctrines. There was one member of my mother's family who was a pronounced Ritualist, and, being a man of no ordinary talent, and admired and loved to a degree by all who knew him, and especially my father, his influence weighed deeply with me. He said very little about his religious opinions before us, yet we knew all about

them from my father, who always expressed great pity for him, as well as surprise on this point. At this time I knew little about the outside world, but at least I gathered more or less unconsciously from my uncle—what otherwise I should have hardly suspected—that there was a real intellectual basis for High Church principles. As my uncle was a man of singularly logical mind and fearless character, I have often wondered why he died a Protestant. I believe however, if he had lived longer than he did, he would have embraced the true faith; as it was, he died before his convictions had full time to ripen. This happened while I was still at school.

When my High Church leanings became known (and I had no thought of concealing them) they became the subject of serious quarrel with my father, who was accustomed to argue with me bitterly, and did not always stop short of abusing me. But this, so far from weakening my views, made me all the more determined to uphold them. I was forbidden to read High Church Literature: to frequent churches with ornate services, a thing I was learning to delight in: and above all, to try and win over my brothers and sisters to my own opinions. In all this I was as disobedient as I dared be. I thought I had a right to say what I believed, and to act up to it; and in trying to influence the others I had not been altogether unsuccessful. This conduct was to be blamed: but if it cannot be defended, at least it may be condoned, on the ground that the Protestantism against which I rebelled depended for its very life upon the same spirit of revolt and self-assertion which was to lead me into trouble,

and yet in the end to prove my salvation. I had the rights of private judgment dinned into my ears every day and all the day; is it any great wonder that I thought I might practise it to suit my own liking, and even to an extravagant extent?

But it was after I left school for Oxford—where I had free scope to follow my own bent, and where I met with kindred spirits—that my love for Ritualism developed to its full extent. I say Ritualism, because that name seems to me to express better than any other the movement into which I now threw my whole heart and soul. But I do not wish to convey the impression that I, and those with whom I most sympathized, were chiefly actuated by love of external show. No doubt we were delighted with the outward pomp of Catholicism as far as it was imitated—and not unsuccessfully—by one of the Oxford churches, which was, at that time, accounted the most advanced in ritual observance. Built in a slummy quarter, and with a poor though fervid congregation, the church to which I refer was a great centre of the Revival, being often patronized by notabilities of the University, and frequented more than any other by High Church undergraduates, especially at what we called the High Celebration, at 8 o'clock every Sunday morning.

Yes! Ritualism, properly so-called, had a great charm for our youthful minds; but what gave it such an extraordinary hold over us (I speak for myself) was that we felt how much it symbolized and imported. Outside of Oxford, I do not think the effect would have been quite the same. The Catholic Revival was known to the world as the Oxford Movement,

and this was the result of no mere accident. I should despair of explaining to those who have not personally known the place, what an almost magical fascination it possesses for those who resort to it at an age when the mind, even of those who are not peculiarly imaginative, is yet susceptible to impressions. Thronged with men of light and leading, instinct with all the movements of modern thought, representative of all that is most attractive in contemporary life, Oxford yet spoke to us most eloquently of a dead past. We felt without reasoning about it that in our University, with its present-day life, the very atmosphere was, as it were, charged with mediævalism ; we could not love her without listening to her voice, and that voice was ever murmuring a sad reproach. Ah ! we knew it well, Oxford was the creation of the Church of Old England, and perhaps we felt better than we could then put into words that the spirit of Oxford, with her sweet beauty and majestic calm, did not quite belong to earth, even though earth claimed her as its own. At every turn we beheld her motto, for it was still clearly writ upon all her works, "*Dominus Illuminatio Mea,*" and the very stones of her colleges bespoke their origin. The one to which I belonged had been founded in the honour of Our Lady; nor could we enter its portals without passing beneath the sculptured sign of the Incarnation, where the Angel kneels before Mary, and the legend is plain for all to read, "*Ave ! gratia plena ! Dominus tecum.*"

Or at Corpus, where I frequently went to visit an old school friend (he was very far from a Ritualist), I could not cross the diminutive quadrangle, without

seeing the Pelican still standing on its central pedestal, and still proclaiming the meaning of the college name and the Mystery it was built to commemorate! These are small details and could be indefinitely multiplied. But it is enough to say that we realized what men our founders were, and what we owed them, Wykeham and Waynfleet and even Wolsey. They were present with us in their works, but yet what a gulf separated us from them! How different from theirs was the world into which we were plunged! It was a hard, a cruel world, with aims, it is true, and ideals of its own, but how little in them to satisfy a starving soul. Instead of faith it offered every blatant form of scepticism, instead of peace intellectual unrest, instead of the religion of Christ love of money and fierce pride in the triumphs of matter. Since then the Catholic Revival claimed to interpret the past and to revivify the present, since it promised to put us in communion with our forefathers from whom we had degenerated, is there any wonder that we accepted it with all the devotion of our hearts? It would not only restore to us the ancient glory of our Cathedrals and Churches, of which we still retained some faint echoes in the services which were so familiar to us, it would bring back faith in Christ, and in his Church, in His sacraments, and above all in the August Presence of our altars, which had been so long desecrated by coldness and neglect. This Presence was the key to our hopes and to our fervour. Round this were grouped fittingly creed and ritual, confession and absolution, Holy Mass and Communion, Requiems for the Dead, devotion to Mary and the Saints, Pro-

cessions and Litanies, joyous Festivals and Confraternities of the Faithful. There was much to be done, but God willed it! It should be done! We should do it! Our Mother the Church had slumbered long enough, but she had only obscured her birth-right, not lost it. She had all the essentials, the Apostolic Succession, the Creeds and the Sacraments; these were her spiritual possessions, these she had never abandoned, nor could they be taken away from her by those who had defaced her beauty and injured her material belongings. Her external Communion with the rest of Christendom had been suspended; but it was only for a time. It, too, would be recovered, and perhaps soon, perhaps by means of our co-operation in the Revival, if we were true to our destiny and to our opportunities. The great thing insisted upon was that all this was to be a true Revival. It was not a wish to conform to, or to imitate, foreign Churches, but to recover the true position of our own. From this point of view, I could not understand the Roman party in the Church of England, so-called because they desired to adopt the Roman rite as far as possible. Personally I was in full sympathy with those who aimed exclusively at the old English, or the Sarum rite, as we called it—I suppose because several copies of the Missal of Sarum, or Salisbury, are still to be found in our libraries. I even expressed myself with such warmth on this subject, that when I afterwards became a Catholic, it was brought up against me as a specially aggravating inconsistency in my conduct.

I have thought it necessary to go at some length into this Ritualistic movement, and the aims and hopes

which it inspired, in order to show what was the state of my mind at the time of my conversion, and to trace, as far as I am able, the mental process which led up to it.

Up to the time of which I write I knew almost nothing of the Catholic Church as she is in herself. All my acquaintance with her depended upon the way in which her doctrines and her life were mirrored in my own surroundings. I had, indeed, when a boy, a few times entered Catholic churches from curiosity, but I had not been particularly impressed, except perhaps with an unwonted and vague sense of mystery. I did not know any Catholics, nor do I think I had ever spoken to a Catholic priest. I had read Faber's "Growth in Holiness," and was deeply moved by it, and greatly impressed, though more shocked than edified by the way he submitted it all to the judgment of the Holy See. One consideration there was, which gave me a sort of uncomfortable feeling at the back of my mind, and that was the conversion of Newman. I had not read his works to any extent, and yet I was under the spell of his personality. His name was always one to conjure with at Oxford, and though I did not then know much about the inner history of the early Oxford movement, I knew, of course, that it was chiefly Newman's work. I remember mentioning this spectre-like thought of Newman to one of the Regius Professors, who had shown a certain friendliness towards me, and that he proceeded to give me the conventional explanation of Newman's conversion in his tendency to unbelief, which had to be unnaturally coerced by an external authority. I

have since learned how very unfounded is this theory, and I don't think that, even in my ignorance of the real Newman, it went very far towards laying my spectre. The fact is, I was myself very profoundly impressed by the scepticism around me ; my inner life had always been, as long as I remember, a perpetual struggle between faith and unbelief. I felt, indeed, very deeply the motives for believing in Christianity. But what interfered with my peaceful acquiescence in it was the knowledge that so many minds, not merely the highest intellects, but the best and truest men, would not, or rather could not, accept the theory of a supernatural revelation.

At the time I allude to, even more perhaps than in recent years, it appeared that not only politics and science, but nearly all the best art and literature of the time, was dominated by a universal denial of all faith. No half-way house seemed to have any attraction for the world at large—certainly it had none for me.

I cannot say how far the thought may have been unconsciously forming in my mind that I was pursuing a shadow, and that the real external Church which I longed for as a sort of possible consummation, a thing to be dreamt of at some distant future, already existed ready-made in the Roman Communion. I know I had been greatly struck by the Vatican Council and its definition of the Infallibility of the Pope. But I knew only the Protestant version of that event, and I regarded it chiefly as a very formidable obstacle to the Reunion of Churches for which my soul yearned. I had been taught to believe the definition had been

extorted from the Bishops mainly by fear ; yet there was something in it to overawe the least sympathetic mind. It was a real instance of ecclesiastical unity, and a very strong evidence of vitality and strength. It put the Papal claims in such a palpable, even though as it seemed an exaggerated, form, and I think it did cause a sort of misgiving in the mind as to the possibility of our hopes being realized—a consummation which we supposed would be brought about by mutual advances and compromises. In fact I knew that an Anglican clergyman of no inconsiderable position had found himself, owing to the definition, in a very uncomfortable dilemma—that of embracing Ultramontaniam or lapsing into Atheism ; and that, being unable to accept the former alternative, he had abandoned himself to the latter. I pitied him, and shuddered for myself !

Such, as well as I can state it, was my frame of mind when the awakening happened. At first it came in the form of a rude shock, though one that I am sure only hastened, and was not the real cause of, what seemed to me at the time as a catastrophe.

I had one college friend dearer to me than all the rest. We had been at school together, though not then so very intimate, he being by a couple of years my senior. At Oxford, however, he became my greatest friend ; we seemed to have but one mind and one soul as to the interests of which I am writing. I owed much to his kindly sympathy, and I thought we had no secrets at least in the matter of religion. What, then, was my amazement, or I should say my consternation, when a second school friend, a class-fellow

of the first, but now belonging to a different college, told me that he dreaded that our mutual friend would become a Romanist and that he had the best reasons for knowing that he was thinking of it. I went straight and asked him if it was true, and if so, why he had not told me. I thought it was very cruel to hear it from another. He replied that he was in an agony of doubt, and he had not dared to break a word to me, lest I, too, should become unsettled, but that now I had heard it, he would tell me all. So we went for a walk, and he told me his state of mind.

Two points of this conversation impressed themselves most indelibly on my memory. The first was a particular difficulty as to the uncertainty of Anglican Orders. I knew of course that these were disputed by Rome, but the thought of doubting about them had never crossed my mind for a single instant. What my friend impressed on me was the necessity for absolute certainty in this matter, and the force of his argument struck me immediately. The second point was this, and it also moved me very deeply, and caused me an impression which is still, after many long years, fresh and vivid in my mind. It is, I imagine, a common experience with those who are brought for the first time in their life face to face with the claims of Rome, to feel a revulsion at what appears to be the cruelty of the doctrine of exclusive salvation. It gives a shock to the mind, as well as to the feelings, to have to contemplate the position which puts not oneself merely but all whom one loves and looks up to as radically, hopelessly wrong. What I felt most was this: Are we all—all the movement, with all its

belongings and its hopes—mere outcasts from the house of God, in absolute error, bereft of all grace, all truth, all hope? Are we, in a word, all “absolutely wrong”?

When I expressed my thought, the other replied—“No! they need not all be wrong. They may be right. You may be right—I was right till I began to doubt. But now all is changed. My point of view is, that my doubts constitute a vocation (I think he used the word) to the true religion. If I reject the grace I shall be lost, but those who have it not are not accountable for it. You may go on as before if you can, and would to God I could do the same!” This simple idea, this distinction between a mere general obligation and a personal one to embrace a truth, was to me revelation number two. It put the doctrine of exclusive salvation in a new and a clearer light; and simple as the explanation was, I do not think it is too much to say that it began the work of my conversion. It did not finish it, and I repeat what I have said above of the whole incident that it was not my friend who caused my conversion, except indeed so far as he set me thinking.

Had not my mind without my knowing it been to some extent prepared, I do not believe that the discovery I had made would have done more than cause me that infinite pain which would have resulted from the loss of so dear a friend. No doubt we are the creatures of circumstances, and all, except the veriest atheist, must allow that Providence guides our course by means of circumstance. Yet, lest I might leave room for the conclusion that my conversion was simply

caused by powerful personal influence, I think it well to remark that as a matter of fact my friend was not received into the Church till after my own conversion. In after years he told me he attributed this crowning grace to help which I was, at the time, fortunate in being able to give him.

My mind had experienced a change which was as great as it was sudden. I had begun to think on new lines ; but I had still a long journey to travel. My greatest dread was that in time I might come to the same state of mind as my mentor ; the thing did not seem so very impossible, for I knew that I was very ignorant about the Roman question. Yet I took for granted many things I had learned about Rome from Protestant sources. The unity and the authority of Rome, especially as displayed in the Vatican Decrees, much impressed me ; there was a look of awe and of majesty about the whole thing—but I took it for granted that it was all a very modern development. I honestly thought we had antiquity on our side, and the overwhelming weight of patristic evidence in our favour. I knew that Roman theologians were subtle, that many things in the Fathers and the Early Church would be explained away or reduced to a minimum of difficulty. But that they could make any serious appeal to the Fathers to prove Papal Supremacy, and above all Infallibility, I thought a simple impossibility.

About this time I came across a work of Cardinal (then Archbishop) Manning which influenced my life more profoundly, I think, than any other book I ever read. In fact it quite revolutionized the situation. How this book got into our College library, I never

knew, for, as I believe, there were very few of the recent works on Roman controversy to be found there. The book I refer to was entitled "Petri Privilegium," and consisted of a series of Pastoral letters written from Rome during the Council, treating of the Infallibility of the Pope, and its definition. As to the latter, it showed that, although all the Bishops had accepted the Decrees, some of them had voted against them even to the end, and no penalties had followed. What, then, came of the statement about coercion to which I alluded above? This seemed an irrefragable argument, but not more so than the luminous extracts from Eastern and Western Fathers laying down and demonstrating from Scripture in the clearest and most trenchant manner the Supremacy and Infallibility of Peter and of his Successors in the Roman See. The importance of these Scripture arguments lay in this. I had often seen them discussed; but from the way the Fathers treated them, I saw at once that they viewed the Supremacy not as a question of ecclesiastical arrangement, but as one of Divine revelation. Here, then, was my position. I had calmly assumed in my own mind that there was one impregnable fortress for Anglicans—namely, the appeal to the Fathers. I saw at a single glance that this position had tumbled down like a house of cards. By a sort of intuition I knew the game was up. If my first experience of Roman controversy was like this, what could I expect would in all likelihood follow, if indeed anything further was needed to follow? I saw, or rather I felt (for I was too sore to reason) that a change of religion was merely a question of time—

that if I were to remain a Christian, I must become, sooner or later, and probably sooner, a Roman also.

About this time my father was coming to Oxford to visit me, and I wished him to know at least something of my frame of mind. I did not dare to broach the subject, but I procured a portrait of Manning and placed it in a conspicuous place in my rooms, hoping that my father would question me about it. This ruse was not very successful. He did allude to the subject, and I tried to tell him what the state of my case was, but afterwards I learned that it was quite without effect. The fact was that, though he had very little belief in my common sense, and none whatever in my reasoning power—the supposition that he could have a son who was also a Papist was one he refused to entertain and was probably incapable of realizing to himself.

And now began the struggle. I still loved the Church of England, especially as I had her pictured to my mind—as a perfect reproduction in the future of what she had been in the past. I loved the life, and the excitement, and the hilarity of the Catholic Revival. I had a home in it, and friends, and prospects, and plans. More than all, I loved Oxford, and I feared I must turn my back upon everything if I became a true Catholic. I tried to hold on, but it was of no use. If I went to Mass, the fear about Anglican Orders haunted me, and I felt I might be adoring a mere piece of unleavened bread and common wine. Once at High Mass the thought was so agonizing at the moment of the Elevation, that I mentally resolved never again to be present at an Anglican Celebration,

a resolution which I have faithfully kept to this day.

I had promised a clergyman, who had been a dear friend and sympathiser in all my aspirations, that I would take no step without consulting a well-known Anglican authority in Oxford, who was supposed to have great power over such as were afflicted with what was known in slang phraseology as Roman fever. I felt this would be little more than a ceremony in my case, but I had pledged my word, and I thought it well to have the interview over. I cannot conceive how the man can have held anyone back, yet he was known to have done so. He tried a little brow-beating first, then, when I cautioned him not to go on with it, he tried argument, or rather statements of his own opinions. These also seemed to me intolerably weak.

My argument was very simple. I merely said : " If there is but One God there can be but one true religion. Where is it ? "

On this question of Unity he said really nothing of any account. On the Infallibility of the Pope all he said was, " If the Pope be personally infallible, he must be also personally impeccable, and immortal (indefectible was the word he used). Can you admit that he has both these qualities ? " All this made very little impression on me, except perhaps a feeling of disgust, not unmingled with pity. But I felt I had kept my word and performed a disagreeable duty.

I was now minus a Religion. I did not yet see my way to become a Catholic, and I was no longer an Anglican. In spite of all the sacrifices involved, I longed to find out that I could submit to Rome, but my old tendency to unbelief revived in fearful earnest.

I was very wanting in courage. Once I spoke to a Catholic Bishop, and asked him was I bound in my present state of mind to give up everything and face absolute destitution, in order merely to find out the truth. He very wisely told me I was, but I did not do it. I felt as though I was acting against my conscience in hesitating, but perhaps God judged me more mercifully than at the time I did myself.

Had I altogether ceased to pray, all would now have been over with me, and I should, like many others, have lapsed into some sort of modified and respectable infidelity. But I prayed on in the dark. I used to recite the "Miserere" morning, noon, and night, and I also used at times to recite the Rosary, though it seemed to me a most hollow mockery.

During the Long Vacation, in order to be away from home, I had taken a tutorship of two little boys in a family, where I met with much kindness and enjoyed every home comfort. Of course I had plenty of time to think, and the more I thought the more miserable I felt. There was an undefinable longing for something, which I felt I could never satisfy as I was. On the other hand I did not see how I could accept all that Catholicity involved, now that I was grappling with it (in my mind only) at close quarters. It was no longer a shrinking from sacrifice—I was too wretched to dread anything of the sort ; it was a sort of dread of taking a leap in the dark. To have a teacher I could implicitly trust ; to have everything which before I had imagined, now ready to my hand ; above all, to have the Real Presence made so real to me as I somehow felt it would be in the Roman

Communion, all this seemed like a dream. Could it be true? Was it not too good to be true? The whole thing to me turned on the question of Transubstantiation. As an Anglican I had fancied I believed it, but now—it seemed all so different. There was all the difference between the charming make-believe of children and the dread realities of life. I was “stretching out lame hands” after Christ, I longed to know that He was not a myth, a creation of diseased human fancy, a mere bubble on the foam of human thought. How could I believe that He is actually near us, with us, in all our Churches and Chapels, living, energising, interceding, hiding Himself behind such a thin veil, and only to save? That I could get so near Him, almost to hear the beatings of His Heart, almost to see Him and grasp Him by the hand? Ah, God! such happiness would be too much, too far beyond the utmost possibilities of all I then could realize of the Love of God. I daresay, nay I know, that I am telling a very common story, but I will tell it all the same. At last grace conquered. I went one day in my despair into a Catholic Church, a little temporary Chapel, made out of a green-house, where some monks had lately come to found a mission in the village where I was living. Everything was so mean and almost squalid compared with the grandeur of the Anglican Churches I had formerly loved. But what a difference! I could not explain it, but I felt it. The place had a calming effect on me, and I determined—not yet to become a Catholic—but at least to cut myself off from everything that could keep me from becoming one. Greatly to their surprise I told

the people in whose house I was, of my resolutions. They did not know very much about me, and being Low Church people, could not understand my frame of mind. Thinking, of course, it was only a sudden impulse that had come over me, they did their best to dissuade me from leaving them. Seeing me firm in my determination they asked me to leave as soon as possible, as they were afraid for the boys. But they did not reproach me in any way, and I felt that the kindness and sympathy they showed me was much more than I deserved, as it might seem as though I was treating them very badly.

In two days I found myself among Catholics, in a large College, where I found no less than five ex-Anglican clergymen studying for the priesthood, two of them Oxford men, and one even a Fellow of my own College. It was a vision of peace and of prospective happiness, and yet the struggle was by no means ended. I had come to study and to pray, but not to take any irrevocable step without feeling the ground firm beneath my feet. Much help was given me by those who had gone through the same process, but I was still alone and as it were naked before God. And the Anglican Establishment how small she looked, and how far off! It was less than half a year that I was one of her most enthusiastic devotees, and now how little she could do to help or to hinder me—to such puny dimensions had she contracted herself. Not that I felt without any attraction to the things I had loved there—but in the shock of battle she was but a paltry thing, so impotent, a mere impertinent intruder fumbling along between the lines of combatants.

I longed to have it over, yet I could not submit to my true mother—the very eagerness of my longing made me hesitate. But God was good, and had provided me help in one of the best priests I ever had the fortune to meet, one who afterwards became a prelate of the Church. He did not hurry me, but gave me encouragement, recommended me not to lay too much stress on feeling, but to take the step if my reason counselled it. This advice I followed and I became a Catholic. Never again for a single moment did I feel any misgiving as to the Divine authority of the Church. The unearthly peace I felt on that day has never deserted me—no not for an instant. The troubles I had for the future were somewhat grave, but they were external to myself. I had to write and inform my father, who, in spite of some severity, had ever shown me true affection and had done for me much more than I deserved. I knew that he would be deeply grieved, and yet he took the news very well, were it not that, owing to Cardinal Manning's most stringent directions, I decided not to return to Oxford to complete my course. This was what shocked my father very deeply, and it was not unnatural that he took the only vengeance he could, that of writing the angriest letters to the "Times," denouncing my ecclesiastical superiors for daring to come between a parent and his child in the matter of his education. I did, however, graduate at a later date.

I was now almost without a penny, without any profession, almost without friends, and what made it harder for me was that I was not then in a very robust physical condition. Yet, as is often the case,

Providence came to my help, and in a most unforeseen way provided for me a fairly good, and not uncongenial employment. This took me over to Ireland, where my life was thrown entirely among Catholics, so that I had a good opportunity of learning a great deal more about my new religion and its actual working than I could have done in my own country. I was, moreover, glad to be quite separated from my relations and from all my former friends, with whom I could no longer live in sympathy. I have remarked that a very large number of English converts have come to Ireland often without seeking it, and I think they have felt that it has been a great grace and a great help. Certainly for my part I could not be too thankful to God for this arrangement and for the great edification and support that I derived from high as well as low among a population almost entirely Catholic.

As I merely proposed to tell the history of my conversion, I need not, and ought not, to go at length into my experiences of the Catholic religion. But a few words will hardly be out of place. I found very many things different from what I expected—many things that are not as they might be—many things that cause pain. But though I expected much, disappointment I have never known, nor cause to waver even for a moment in my allegiance to my newly-found mother.

Many things I had imagined and longed for in the Church of England—faith and unity, clear doctrine and holiness of life, obedience and chastity—in a word, the Christianity of the Gospel and of the Early Church. That such things could come back to

the Church of England by means of the feverish enthusiasm of the Ritualistic movement, all this, as I learnt from daily experience and the wisdom of maturer life, was but the dream of a child.

It was the dream of a child, because the process by which it was to be realized was, not that the Church should impress all these good things on us, but that we should impress them on the Church. And where were we to get them from? Clearly from the power of our own imagination.

Now my experience of the Catholic Church is this—not that she always answers in detail to our imaginings, but that she has the Spirit of Christ beyond the wildest flights of imagination, and that *she impresses it on her children*, if they will allow her to do so.

And the longer I live, and the more I know of the life of the Catholic Church, the deeper does my conviction grow that she carries her divinity clearly marked upon her brow. It is now not, "How can I bring the Church back to Christ?" but, "How can I bring myself into line with the Church and thus into union with Christ?" If you, dear P—, or anyone else, by reading of my simple experiences, should be helped to recognise something of the sweetness of the Catholic Church, of her grace to strengthen and to save, they will not have been written in vain.

H. B.

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ON

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